

no.57 the magazine of cinema & television fantasy 95p

SCIENCE FICTION FANTASY STARBURST

THIS ISSUE...

A DIFFERENT KIND OF E.T.

XTRO

a gallery of Horror Stars in
**HOUSE OF THE
LONG SHADOWS**

Dario Argento's new movie

TENEBRAE

director Sam Raimee
on **EVIL DEAD**





TENEBRAE

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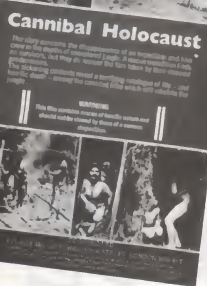
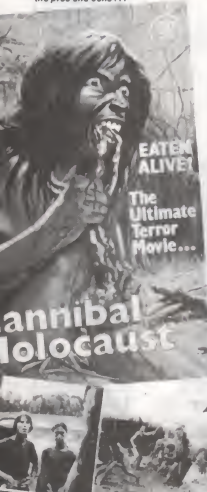
STARBURST CLASSIC 43

IN EARLY 1981 A PRINT OF A PREVIOUSLY "LOST" MOVIE TURNED UP IN LIVERPOOL. ALAN MURDOCH REPORTS ON THIS LOST CLASSIC—THE MAN WITH 9 HEADS.

LETTERS

SENSE AND CENSORSHIP

The following letter has been reprinted from our late, lamented sister magazine *cinema*. It concerns the ever-lively subject of censorship in general and video in particular. As the matter of censorship is most frequently raised in connection with horror films, we thought it would be pertinent to transfer the censorship issue over to *Starburst* to allow a more in-depth consideration of the pros and cons...



VIDEO DANGERS

Firstly, may I make it quite clear that I am not against video. I use this media of "in home" entertainment myself and derive a great deal of pleasure from the system.

I am, however, an ardent supporter of the cinema, the only place, in my opinion, to fully appreciate a film worthy of big screen presentation.

My first grievance—I have become increasingly disturbed by the number of youngsters being allowed to hire and view "X" rated video films. I have heard kids from age six up, boasting about what they have seen on video, and having seen three girls, aged about ten, walk out of a video library with the uncensored version of *The Hills Have Eyes* who can be blamed if these youngsters are influenced by such material? Certainly not the local cinema.

The time has now come for video libraries to impose stricter controls either by checking the age of hirer and making sure "X" rated films don't get into the wrong hands, after all, the cinema makes every attempt to maintain a strict degree of censorship control of its viewing audience.

My second grievance is piracy, for although I am looking forward to seeing E.T. at the cinema along with many other cinemagoers, I am aware and disturbed to hear that people have already seen this on video along with other titles like *Pottergeist* and *Who Dares Wins*. We are all aware of this pirate practice which damages both the cinema and video industry, so what can be done? How about substantial monetary rewards to anyone with information leading to the discovery and/or conviction of persons involved in this illegal practice. Human nature being what it is I feel sure people would start talking.

Peter Robinson,
Baverley,
North Humberdale.

Alan McKenzie replies: "The subject of censorship has always been a touchy one. How can one call for censorship of violence in movies, when the Six O'Clock News shows you the real thing—no special effects—as you sip your evening Martini? Movies mirror life, not the other way around. Of course, the young should be protected—but you can't stop the movies. And when you start to censor the news, you have a very unhealthy climate to live in. There are no simple answers. Ultimately, the individual should be his/her own censor. (Ma, I hate Lucio Fulci pictures!)"

"As for piracy, sure, something should be done. But as long as there are customers who prefer paying £15 for the latest releases to paying £50 pounds for last year's films, there will always be piracy!"

THIS WOMAN HAS JUST CUT, CHOPPED, BROKEN, and B... FIVE MEN BEYOND RECOGNITION

BUT NO JURY IN AMERICA WOULD EVER CONVICT HER!

In answer to editor Alan McKenzie's response we received this letter from an outraged *cinema* reader...

Balls! in a word.

That's my comment to your reply to Peter Robinson's letter in *cinema* 9. You glibly brush his arguments aside with an appeal to the moral difficulties of censorship, and to the violence shown on the Six O'Clock News. Let me say a few words in reply to you.

I am a secondary school teacher, and I see and hear how pubescent kids respond to the horror/sex videos that they can easily get their hands on. It is disturbing to hear them evaluate the merits of a film in terms of how much gore you can see, and they are not just watching porn, but perverted sex, by the sound of things. All this sadomasochism does affect them. Oh, it might be different from kid to kid depending on personality, upbringing, and all kinds of things, but there is a hardening of attitudes and a loss of sensibility going on. It is worrying to see how blasé they are about suffering, and how sex is not just giggled at in Mayfair any more but is leered at in Lewd and bizarre forms. Yes, I do think some form of control should be introduced, alongside our cinema ratings.

As for censorship, yes, it is an unpleasant word, but maybe it is the only responsible thing at times, and especially for children who are so impressionable. Let me ask you how many kids you know who watch this sort of video...

...do you know any, do you hear them discuss them? I'm afraid you sound as though you are mouthing some trandy platitudes from an adult ivory tower. Are you a parent? Would you let your 9-13 year old watch things like *Driller Killer*?

Irresponsible is how I sum your attitude up. As for your comment about the news, well, I haven't seen much violence. You see the odd war victim or starving child, but most of the news is clean footage of distant events. Hardly a shocker, or potential video material! Furthermore, any nasty scenes on the news are real and no attempt is made to glorify or wallow in them.

I'm not trying to speak out against all use of violence in the media. I agree that is fantastically unrealistic, but the current wave of twisted sex and violence tales just turns me off. Neither am I against you being into that, if that is your forte, but I am against children having access to them!

Kevin O'Donnell,
Atrincham,
Cheshire.

Alan McKenzie replies: "This is such an ill-considered letter that it's difficult to know where to begin. How about at the beginning...?"

"Rudeness is hardly necessary to get my attention. Every letter that comes to the editorial office is read by me. That's a guarantee. But I'm not here to quibble about manners. Rether, I'd like to quote Paul Schrader from *Starburst* 55 when he was asked by a journalist at the Deauville Film Festival what responsibility if any did he feel he had, following the effects of his *Taxi Driver* script upon John Hinckley Jr, President Reagan's would-be assassin?

"As cruel as it is to say it, there is a certain risk you run doing anything, and as much as you like to prevent this kind of social issue, it's part of the overall price paid for free artistic expression."

"At the same time as the Reagan assassination attempt, Mark Chapman

TURNED
...!

I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE

...AN ACT OF REVENGE

JERRY GROSS presents "I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE"
A CINEMAGIC PICTURES PRODUCTION
A MEIR ZARCHI FILM

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shot John Lennon. And Chapman was obsessed with the book *Catcher in the Rye*. Both of these cases received a lot of notoriety in America, primarily because they were white boys who had identified with famous works of art and tried to kill famous people. The same crime, I think, occurs in every country—it just doesn't get as much attention.

"That's the risk we pay with an open society. I don't think there are acceptable alternatives in a free society. Censorship, for example, is a dangerous game and it's not going to do the job.

"A film or book does not create a psychopath—the psychopath will just find something else to connect with after such censorship of books and films. So you will have the psychopath, but you will not have art.

"You will still have Raskolnikov, but you won't have Crime and Punishment."

"Now, by no stretch of the imagination can video nasties be considered Works of Art, but they are works of art. In a democracy, I always thought, freedom to express ideas is the privilege of every citizen.

"You, Kevin, are condemning a genre of movies that you have never experienced at first hand (I quote, 'They are not just watching porn, but perverted sex, by the sound of things') You are talking about disturbing influences without being specific. What disturbing influences? Disturbing to you or disturbing to the children? You are making the fundamental mistake of assuming that just because you happen to be repulsed by the welkers of all-too-fake blood, that the same sight will leave irreparable emotional scars on anyone under 18. Poppycock! Show me the psychological research to back up

your claim, then I'll reconsider. However, I agree that it is undesirable to allow children to see such films as they may find the goriness temporarily upsetting. The resulting nightmares are unlikely to damage but are very likely to cause a few sleepless nights.

"You say that censorship may be the only responsible thing at times. Again I disagree. It is not the government's job to legislate about what we may or may not see under the pretence of protecting youngsters. The British Board of Film Censors should be allowed to award certificates but they should not be allowed to cut a film. And nobody should be allowed to tell us what to watch on our own video machines in the privacy of our own homes. I was always under the impression that an Englishman's home is his castle. Seems that I was wrong.

"Yes, I've spoken with youngsters who have seen so-called video nasties. Like all youngsters, they seemed to prefer the blood-spattered messacre of Friday the 13th to Donald Duck's Frantic Antics. But that is only to be expected. Children are naturally fascinated by fictional violence. Take time out to watch a group of nine year old boys playing 'war'. Watch the relish with which they 'shoot' and 'stab' each other. Yet those same youngsters would very likely be horrified if they were to witness a road accident in which real blood flowed. Never make the mistake of under-estimating the intelligence of children. They are quite capable of distinguishing between what is real and what is make-believe. Certainly, I could at that age.

"I'm sure I can be forgiven for observing that for a teacher you don't seem to know very much about children.

"But to come to your next point, you have hit on the solution and merrily passed it by without realising it. You ask whether I would let my children watch video nasties. I don't have any children but if I had, I wouldn't! For the simple reason that I think that nightmares and sleepless nights would be a heavy price to pay for 90 minutes diversion. The point you missed is that if all parents took that attitude, you'd never have felt compelled to set your muddled ideas down on paper. The whole point is that it is the parents' responsibility what their children watch on the video machine. It is certainly not the concern of the government nor other semi-official bodies. 'Trendy platitudes'? I think not. Just plain common sense and a genuine concern for the privileges of the majority. 'Irresponsible'? Never! Just a very real fear that people like you would far rather even the simplest qualitative judgements be taken out of the hands of adult citizens and passed over to the faceless hordes of officialdom. Personally, I have no desire to look at 'video nasties' (and yes, I have seen several). But I'll defend to the death an adult's democratic privilege to watch what he wants in his own home.

"You haven't seen much violence on the news? Maybe you don't watch much tv. I can remember a particularly disturbing image of a nine year old Vietnamese girl running along a dirt road, her body blazing with napalm. Or more recently, the piles of dead bodies of refugees in a camp in Beirut who were massacred by 'Christian Militia' while the Israeli Army did nothing. Yet you see this is hardly shocking. Oh dear! I think it is not the children who are hardening and losing their sensibility, but you. That you dismiss such images as 'real' and as clean footage of distant events' is

profoundly disturbing to me. The fact that such things happen for away makes them alright?

"Nevertheless, I do not want to see this kind of footage disappear from our news broadcasts. Then perhaps the youngsters who see this kind of thing and who realise that it is not make-believe will remember it when they grow up and not inflict such atrocities on each other.

"In the final analysis, the most telling phrase in your letter is 'the current wave of twisted sex and violence tales just turns me off'. Like other members of the Moral Majority (in reality a Moral Minority) you wish to ban, by law, what you believe you may find personally objectionable (in the unlikely event of your ever being sufficiently motivated to take a look for yourself) by pretending to fear for the psychological safety of our minors. My advice is to leave the protection of children where it belongs—in the hands of the parents. Otherwise you will be sowing the seeds for some very unhealthy laws.

"If you have anything to say in reply, please feel free. We'll print it if you want to. We believe in freedom of expression!"



STAN'S ODYSSEY

So I was right. Stanley Kubrick doesn't want to repeat himself and make the 2001 sequel, *2010*. ... At least, he's not going to direct it, although his Polaris company remains involved with the book's rights and MGM remains hopeful about some kind of input from Stan.

Anyway, there endeth Julia Phillips' close encounter with Arthur C. Clarke and his sequel novel. It was Julia, one of Spielberg's two CE3K producers, who threw an epic-sized spanner in Kubrick's galactic works by claiming (last issue) that she had the rights to Clarke's long-awaited *2010: Odyssey Two*. MGM production chief Freddie Fields struck back in cold fury, saying all rights had long been sewn up between Clarke, MGM and Kubrick's Polaris. Julia continued to insist this was not the case, that she, and she alone had a screen deal with Clarke. She fanfared her 2010 project at the top of a new deal of movies she would make for 20th Century-Fox.

Well, she had a good run while she lasted. Julia's been out of favour and Hollywood—since CE3K and if nothing else, her odd, to say the least of it, claim on 2010 put her back in the film-making arena and made it clear she was back to stay. She just picked the wrong horse is all. Since her claim, backed up by Fox, hit the MGM fan, there has been a diplomatic silence from Fox and everything settled down.

If nothing else, Julia would appear to have got MGM moving ...

Freddie Fields has now announced 2010 as the most expensive of his studio's 140-million dollars worth of twenty movies planned for production this year. Planning, budgeting, research and development for the



Above: Director Stanley Kubrick pictured on the set of 2001: A Space Odyssey. It seems unlikely that Stanley will be helming the sequel, 2010, though he could well be involved in some capacity.

eventual effects may well start rolling this year, but I doubt the film will actually begin shooting until 1984 ... for an '85 release.

Then came Freddie's surprise (or it was to some people who don't read *Things To Come*). Stanley Kubrick will be involved with the 2010 production but he will not be directing the sequel. Fields is already, as he says, having talks, as he's bound to say, with "a major film-maker". This could be Doug Trumbull, one of the effects men on 2001, and who has now finally finished his *Brainstorm* film for MGM (it opens in America on June 10, a week before *Octopussy*, sorry about that, Doug). Or it could well be John Milius, who has already been seen to be working with Kubrick on, presumably, some other scripting venture.

Or it could be neither of them. Far be it from me to start any more stupid claims about 2010, but let me just add that back in 1973, Freddie Fields happened to be the agent of a film-maker called ... Steven Spielberg. If there's anyone who knows 2001 almost as well as Stan, it's Steve. He was running it almost daily while shooting CE3K in Mobile, Alabama. With *Indiana Jones and ET II* on his plate, Spielberg could not be free to tackle 2010 (even if he is, or wished to) until way into 1984, if then ... And so far, of course, MGM, which is officially MGM/UA these days, like Fox, is the only major studio in town Mr E.T. hasn't worked with.

Steve, though, is more a mega than a major film-maker. So Freddie could have been referring to Ridley Scott, Irvin Kershner, George Miller, John Landis, Joe Dante ... take your pick ... Richard Marquand, David Lynch, Mike Hodges, Harlow Kottiss ... But not Jeannot Szwarc, because he's all fixed up with ...

SUPERGIRL

Well, she's been found. She remains a pretty picture—a very pretty, if all-American looking picture—for the moment. Her name is Helen Slater. She's 19 and hails from New York. And she's the choice from hundreds of applicants by the Salkinds, who, let's face it didn't so badly with unearthing Chris Reeve, and she is flying around Pinewood Studios for most of the summer as *Supergirl*.

I'll have more info on young Helen later. For now, I'm more concerned with the movie. David Odell has written the script, which the brilliant Richard MacDonald is designing, for producer Timothy Burrill. Back from nowhere—he finished *Enigma* two years ago and that's only dribbled out about now; and no, it didn't have special effects to hold it up, though it could do with 'em—Jeannot Szwarc is directing this first adventure of *Superman's* cousin from Chicago.

Straight after what might prove to be the start of a *Supergirl* series (something has to take the place of *Superman*), the Salkinds stay on at Pinewood for their biggest hero, "the

greatest living legend of all time". That's not Spielberg, remember, that's ... *Santa Claus*. That one, I gather, will just sleigh ya!

Incidentally, the Salkinds have put *Superman III* up for sale to television already!

ZONE ACCIDENT

Sad to report, everybody is still dragging their feet in issuing reports of the *Twilight Zone* triple-death tragedy last July. Part of the Hollywood lathery is allied with changes in California Commission jobs following the recent elections. Before leaving his post as the golden state's Labour Commissioner, Patrick Henning, sent out a confidential memo urging his agents to move faster and suspend Warner Brothers' permit to use child actors, for six months minimum—while John Landis should be "blackballed from obtaining a permit for a period of not less than one year". With as many as thirty kids a month working for Warner films and TV shows, that's some punishment, if Henning's recommendations are acted on. As he says,

more than 32,000 tots work in Hollywood productions each year and his office must act to protect them from such "absolute neglect" by employers failing to adhere to the strict child labour safety rules.

All studios, all directors know those rules. "Child labour laws limit the school-aged actor's working day to a mere four hours." Patrick Henning didn't say that. The voice-off announcer did it in a mini-news report about directing kiddies, part of Universal's E.T. video Press kit for use by global TV networks!

Ironically, while the FBI continue slowly making tests in Washington to determine the size of the special effects explosion which knocked the *Twilight Zone* chopper out of the sky on top of Vic Morrow and the two Vietnamese children, Hollywood has already acted on a side-issue of the tragedy—the use of live ammunition in movies. Some weeks after the accident, it was learned that live ammo had been used in a scene with Vic Morrow, the very day before his ghastly decapitation. A joint labour-management safety committee in Film City has quickly issued an eleven-point

agreement restricting to live ammo to the strictest possible conditions—including that the marksmanship of any such ammo must be demonstrated to the director before any filming begins.

That's good. That's fine. That's even sensible. But now will they get on with the real job ... of finding out why actors, children included, were killed on a movie set. And make sure it doesn't happen again.

TITLE TWITCHERS

John Landis's new comedy, *Black and White*, is now *Trading Places*. Should do well. John's star, Eddie Murphy, is the hottest kid on the block since *48 Hrs* ... *Murder By Phone* is Roger Corman's new handle for the Canadian horror, *Bells*, first covered in *Starburst* as far back as No 38. Pity you couldn't use *Dial M For Murder*, eh Rog? Actually, my phone bill is more shocking than the movie ... And Robert Voskanian's 1977 voodoo-gothic trip, *The Child*, is finally happening with a new campaign and title to match: *Kill And Go*. Well, like they say, if at first you don't succeed—re-issue.

FAST THINGS

Direct from becoming the fourth Blafeld in *Seen's Never Say Never Again*, Max Von Sydow flew to Mexico to David Lynch's *Dune* movie... No such luck for Roger Moore's villain, Kabir Bedi. He was due to join Britain's highly expensive *Far Pavilion's* tv mini-series back in Jaipur, India, when much of *Octopussy* was shot. But Moore took longer to finish him off or something, he was delayed at Pinewood and Omar Sharif nabbed his Jaipur role...

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ART

Tony Anthony's first 3-D actioner since he started the tri-di ball rolling anew with *Comin' At Ya* is, well, to be frank, a bit of an eye-strain. The script of *Treasure of the Four Crowns* also strains to much—trying to be *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. But then, isn't everything else?

Everything opens well enough as Indy... er, that is Stryker dashes through a plethora of near escapes in a castle and not one word of dialogue is spoken, not even dubbed, for about twenty minutes. If only it stayed that way. To collect the title treasure, antique crowns with golden balls and connected, but of course, with all things good and evil, Tony Anthony sets up a squad of machos and one circus trapeze girl. All action again from then on, but the 3-D effects are too fast, in most respects. Some worthwhile special effects. Otherwise what we have here is *Raiders of the Mission Impossible Files*. The script is all golden balls.

3-DIRECTOR

Richard Fleischer has become the first Hollywood director of any note to helm one of the new 3D comeback movies. He's directing Dino De Dum-Dum's *Amityville 3-D* in Mexico, something of a comeback for Dick. It's the first genre movie tackled in ten years for the director of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954), *Fantastic Voyage* (1966), *Blind Terror* (1971) and *Soylent Green* (1973). It's also his first 3-D venture since his *Arène* rodeo movie with the late Gig Young exactly thirty years ago. *Arène*, I've been informed by some tri-di experts, was a budding good movie. Maybe Fleischer's return to the fold will help encourage other decent directors to chance their arm with 3-D. That's all the gimmick needs to really take off again. Somebody who knows what the hell he's doing behind the camera.

HULK'S BULK

Lou Ferrigno, ex-Incredible Hulk, as if you don't know that, has found his new métier in film. Having knocked off *The Seven Magnificent Gladiators* and *The Invincible Hercules* in last summer, he's booked his Pan Am ticket for Rome and more of the 'thud'n' blunder stuff. He's due for the third of the incredible Herc series which is going to be called exactly that by producer John Thomp-

son—*The Incredible Hercules*. Lou must like the beard. Or the pasta.

BLADE'S CUTS

Good news about *Blade Runner*—for Americans. Five of the film's minutes slashed by the Ladd Company are back in the U.S. video-cassette release. I trust the British vid will also be completed as possible. In fact, considering the movie's comparative failure in cinemas, and the obvious fact that only real fans of it will buy—or rent—the cassette, why can't Ridley Scott put out his definitive version on tape. Naturally, I'd prefer to see that cut where it should be (should have been!) on the cinema screen. But an integral *Blade Runner* on cassette would be better than no such version at all.

Maybe such possibilities are just around the corner—thanks to Peter Bogdanovich. He has altered the vid-versions of two of his old movies. *The Last Picture Show* (1971) has the extra minute he was able to add to some of his release prints; and his EMI flop, *Nickelodeon* (1976)—aka Burt Reynolds meets Tatum O'Neal—is now exactly as Bogdanovich always wanted it. In black-and-white, as suits a film about the early days of movie-making. Good idea, Pete! Directors' prints—not pirate prints.

AVORIAZ '83

Jim Henson, Frank Oz and Gary Kurtz came, saw and conquered the legendary fantasy festival up in the French ski resort of Avoriaz. Once *The Dark Crystal* had been shown, very early on in the week, and backed up by an equally stunning tv film of how the movie was made, Avoriaz '83 was a one-horse race. Good news for Universal, which apparently had been none too sure about the supra-puppet film's potential in Europe.

And that is really what Avoriaz (like the same organising team's Deauville event) is all about. A good excuse for a week or so in the snow (or sun), unveiling a bunch of films, most of which are about to open in France anyway and can reap the benefits of a publicity and promotional event. Well, that's no bad thing and Avoriaz, scene in the past of the initial Euro-tri-umphs of Spielberg, De Palma, George Miller, etc, widened its scope this year to include French entries, for once.

There were three entries in all, and two found the trip very much to their liking. Luc Besson won two awards, the Critic's nod and the 'special' jury prize for his black-and-white thriller, *The Last Battle*. (I'll review it later; for now let me add it's so good, Hollywood film-maker Alan J. Pakula, on the jury, offered to produce Besson's next movie!) And *Demon in the Island*, a return to straight feature making by an old buddy of mine, Francis Leroi, who has been stuck in porno for the last eight years or so. He collected the brand-new suspense award. There were those who felt it more deserving of a blood and guts trophy...

Several of the jury, including the



president, previous Avoriaz grand prize winner George Miller, wanted to give Leroi's talented star, Anny Duperey, the acting prize. In fact, they had insisted on such a prize being inaugurated this year. The final votes of the jury (including *Quest For Fire's* director Jean-Jacques Annaud and a bunch of extremely odd genre "buffs" like grizzled Hollywood veteran Sam Fuller, French comedy director Gerard Oury, painter Claude Verlindé, composer Claude Bolling and actresses Marthe Keller, Ingrid Thulin, Dayle Haddon) went to Barbara Hershey in *The Entity*. Well, it pays to show up in person!

I wouldn't have been too surprised if they'd passed the acting honours where they really belonged. To Jim and Frank and any of Jean-Pierre Amiel's *Dark Crystal* mimes!

The third French film? Interesting. But nothing to write home to *maman* about, despite being the cinema comeback of novelist and erotic, not to say kinky movie-maker, Alain Robbe-Grillet (author of *Last Year in Marienbad*, no less). His first movie in eight years, *La Belle Captive*, is... what shall I say? ... very Robbe-Grilletian. But alas, nothing new after such an absence.

There was another French flick around, Yves Boisset's *The Prize of Peril*. And the less said about that one the better. The only peril involved is buying a ticket to see it...

The Entity, itself, another comeback, I guess, for Sidney J. Furie, and Don Coscarelli's *The Beastmaster* (aka Conan The Vegetarian) shored the Antenne 2 prize, donated by the second French Tv channel. And John Landis was probably very surprised to hear back in L.A. that *An American Werewolf In London* had collected the Thompson electronic combine's new award for the

best fantasy video flavour of the month.

Dh yes, and good ole Harley Cocklass wasn't forgotten, either. He shared that special jury trophy with Luc Besson for New Zealand's entry, *Battletruck*. That is already out and about in French cinemas as *Le Camion de la mort*. That's *Death Truck*, Harley. But then anything's better than the Cornelia title, *Warlords of the 21st Century*, no?

The losing movies included Peter Walker's *House of Long Shadows* despite its spirited if garish collection of Cushing, Lee, Price and Carradine; Aaron Lipstadt's *Andriod*; Roger Christian's well-received, *The Sender*; another good great British entry in Lindsey C. Vicker's supernaturalistic *Appointment*; Alan Rudolph's *Endangered Species*, which could be too well named for its own good; Fassbinder's last acting role in Wolf Gremm's *Kamikaze*, from West Germany; something called *The Imp* from Hong Kong; and Czech director's Jirach Herz' *Ferale Vampire* which had a touch of Paul Bartel's never-made *Frankenkar*, perhaps, in that it starred a sports car that seemed to run on the blood of its drivers.

And just for fun, not competing in other words, were John Huston's mess of *Phobia* (1980), Russ Meyer's *Faster Pussycat Kill Kill* (1966), the 3-D Friday 13th number and Howard Cohen's *Saturday The 14th*... and I'm not really sure which was the funniest. As in "absurd", I mean.

But where were the really new, new films? Still waiting for French distributors to pick 'em up and enter them this time next year, I suppose. Films like *Steve Paul's Slapstick*, from the Kurt Vonnegut novel. That's already doing great guns in West Germany, despite being trounced by E.T. And films, I mean, like...

THINGS TO COME

CRONENBERGERS

David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* has finally hit the screens. In Winnipeg...? And he's done it again, all right. Combining the current love affair with video with his usual shock in trade—visceral effects by the bucketful. The thriller, as you may recall, is about sex and violence on TV; not an attack on the tube, but on how the tube can be used. Cronenberg is well served by an upmarket cast for once: James Woods, Deborah Harry, Les Carlson (as the boss of the satellite TV torture show), the extremely delightful Canadian actress Sonja Smits and some very special effects from Rick Baker. And that's all I'm saying for now. So there!

David, meantime, has postponed—ad hoc postponed for him—his next *Twins* project and is well into his or scripter Jeffrey Boam's version of Stephen King's *Dead Zone*, instead, in Toronto. Done again, he's going for a strong cast: Christopher Walken, *The Deer Hunter* Oscar-winner and due soon in Trumbull's *Brainstorm*; Martin Sheen, made up for *Enigma* with *Gandhi*; Brooke Adams, barely seen since *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*; veteran character actress Colleen Dewhurst; Herbert Lom and Allen's Nostromo skipper, Tom Skerritt.

John Carpenter's usual partner, Debra Hill, is producing the movie which—no no—is a Dino De Dumbnuts project. Somehow, I expect Cronenberg—the last real independent of our genre (wouldn't you say?)—to over-come the usual Dino... jinx. David's sticking very close to his own crew topped, for example, by Mark Irwin on camera.

Before Cronenberg took over the King property, the film had been developed by Stanley Donen (whose *Saturn 3* looked as if it was produced by Dino). Later, Sydney Pollack took a crack at it. He wound up making *Tootsie* and becoming an instant millionaire, instead. Somewhere along the line Steve King wrote a script that was immediately junked by Dino. "Too complex," he said. Yes, well, Steve does know words with more than four letters.

O'BANNON HITS BACK

The other hot release of the hour is the latest screenplay from Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby, *Blue Thunder*. When I first heard about this flick (directed by John Badham, the *Saturday Night Fever* and *Dracula* guy), it sounded a routine cops 'n' chases number. Bullshit with choppers! Hahl! It turns out to be the jumpiest, most action-packed, humanoid strip-cartoon movie since *Mad Max* first showed his antipodean nose.

Roy Scheider has been a cop before. In *The French Connection* and the first two *Jaws* movies. But never a cop like the choppering Murphy. He has the last word in anti-terrorist weapons—the thoroughly lethal *Blue Thunder*

chopper, what else? The helicopter is stuffed full with armaments designed to improve no baddy's health—a 20mm electric cannon with six barrels, plus all manner of outrageous listening devices, an infra-red zoom camera that can see through walls, heat detectors, and, of course, an on-tap computer index file of all questionable folk and shady operations on the streets below. All designed, so the film tells us, to help protect the 1984 Olympics in L.A.

Scheider is assisted by young Daniel Stern (Shrieve in *Diner* and if you haven't seen *Diner* yet, what's keeping you?) and Candy Clark, who fell for *The Man Who Fell To Earth* in 1976. Malcolm McDowell is the villain and the final thirty minute duel between Scheider and McDowell, a bunch of USAF F-16s (miniatures) in and around and between the leaning towers of the Los Angeles skyline knock the merry hell out of *Firefox*.

The film has one helluva lot of action and fun; Scheider likes to chopper around what has to be called Rear Windows, when the L.A. babes are doing their Jane Fonda work-outs in the raw. It also has the final appearance of the late Warren Dates (as Scheider's boss) and the film is dedicated to him.

I gather that most if not all of the actual psychology of Dan and Don's characters has been cut to nothingness (a brief Vietnam flashback hardly fully explains the hate Scheider and McDowell have for each other), but I hope O'Bannon and Jakoby don't have to rush to court or the media and start bellyaching too much about all of that. The film is a zinger!

DYKSTRA GAMES

John Dystra won an Oscar for *Star Wars*. He was king of the effects business for all of an hour. He was in bad odour when ripping off his own big screen work for *Battlestar Galactica*. And the less said about *Firefox*, the better. He has now signed up with the Coleco Industries group in Connecticut

... to help design video games and computer software. Something George Lucas said, John?

& FASTER THINGS

Rocky III of the Tiger and Vangelis' *Chariots of Fire* album have both beaten Johnny Williams' *E.T.* score to platinum discs. So far, *E.T.* rests on the gold spot... Sean Connery's 007 producer, Jack Schwartzman, has another proud production. His wife, Talia Shire—*Rocky*'s screen missus and Francie Coppola's sister—has given birth to their son... Oscar-winning ordinary person Timothy Hutton chosen as the guy digging up *The Iceman* human from zonks ago in Norman Jewison's Canadian production. Aussie Fred Schepisi directs... George Hamilton is dusting off his cape, fangs and the Lugosi accent for *Love At Second Bite*... Will he call the third one, *Indigestion*...? *Mandrake The Magician* is still going to happen. In April, they tell me. Yeah, but a year ago they told me it'd begin in September '82.

M'SIEUR FRANKENSTEIN

French director Alain Jessua has a comedy lined up called *Frankenstein 1990*. Sounds like Mel Brooks hits Paris, but I'm sure Jessua has something better than that up his Cardin sleeve. He's a fine film-maker; he should be after training with such greets as Jacques Becker, Marcel Carné, Max Ophüls and Yves Allégret. You might even know Jessua's work. Richard Dreyfuss does. He's due in a Hollywood version of the Frenchman's second film, *Life Upside Down* (1964). Better still, was his 1967 thriller, about that most cherished of all French professions, a *bande-dessinée* or comic-strip artist, *Jeu de massacre! The Killing Game* with the '65 *Thunderball* Bond guy, Claudine Auger.



Above: Malcolm McDowell, of Cat People fame, stars alongside Roy Scheider in the Dan O'Bannon scripted *Blue Thunder*.

FRANKENSTEIN'S M'SIEUR

Mel Brooks is sending up the genre again, though. He's added *Solarbabies* to the Brooksfilm '83 schedule. It's a kind of *Babes in the Wood* meets *Amateur Graffiti* set in the year 2025. Mel won't be in it (that's the best news). He's not writing or directing it either—otherwise it'd become *Brooke Shields Zaps Flash Gordon*, I'm sure. As usual with his Brooksfilm operation, Mel has a brand new helmer testing his wings with Roderick Taylor's fun script. After David Lynch on *The Elephant Man*, Graeme Clifford on *Frances*, Richard Benjamin on *My Favourite Year*—Doug Metrov is getting the *Solarbabies* break.

PS ON SS

Having finished his top-secret segment for the *Twilight Zone* anthology, Steven Spielberg says he's not sure when Warner Brothers will release the film. Looks, for the moment, more like the Autumn than what could be another blitzkrieg U.S. summer what with *Jedi*, *Superman III*, *Oceanquest* and *Jaws 3-D* already lined up for battle. Meantime, China, India (007 country in the Roger Moore film) and England are the final location sites for the new *Raiders*.

While on the subject on the great Spielberg—am I ever off it these days?—I must admit to at least two wholly rotten errors in my recent and, as I now see, all too rapidly written—well, typed—*Spielberg Story* in *Starburst* and the late lamented cinema.

1. The old film I remember which appeared to paint a crime-capital view of Phoenix, Arizona, where Steve was raised, was in fact *The Phenix City Story* (1955) and set in Phenix, Alabama, which was assuredly America's wickedest city for a while. My memory was right, my spelling, or my reference book's spelling was off the creek. 2. Worst still (unforgiveable!), Steve's famous triple-zoom-reverse shot in *Jaws* was utilising Hitchcock's shot from *Vertigo* (1958), of course, and not *Marnie* (1964)—a quite ridiculous slip of my grey cells, particularly as *Vertigo* is a semi-classic and *Marnie* is about the worst-ever Hitch film and only to be remembered for the dreadful and undisguised backdrop in Tippi Hendren's street when Sean Connery comes a-calling, or a-chasing her. Please accept my apologies for both rather asinine errors. Be sure (plug, plug!) they and, hopefully any others, will be eradicated in the new, improved and, if you can stand it, longer version of the articles in my book due to be published by London's Zomba Books for the summer.

FASTEST THINGS

Next video game on the mart, is based on *The Dark Crystal*. 'Twill have to be good to match the movie. That's making Spielberg (but not *E.T.*) money. A million bucks a day.

collectors' corner

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2-18 @ 35p ea.

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1-42, 44, 45, 51, 54, 56-60, 62 @ 25p ea.

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1-20 @ 25p ea.

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1, 2, 4, 5, 7-10 @ 50p ea., 11-16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25 @ 60p ea., 28, 32-50 @ 35p ea., 51-83, 96-98 @ 30p ea., 102-108, 110, 112-117 @ 25p ea., 118-126, 128-139 @ 20p ea.

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7-10 @ 2.00p ea., 11-20 @ 1.50p ea., 21-25 @ 1.00p ea., 31-50 @ 75p ea., 51-100 @ 60p ea., 101-250 @ 40p ea., 251-300 @ 25p ea., 311-352 @ 25p ea.

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1 @ 3.00p, 2-5 @ 2.00p ea., 6-18 @ 1.00p ea.

PURE MARVEL:

1 @ 40p.

UNCLE LEPY WEEKLY:

1-2 @ 2.50p ea., 3-6 @ 1.00p ea., 7-10 @ 75p ea., 11-40 @ 60p ea., 41-47 @ 85p ea.

SUPERHEROES WEEKLY:

1 @ 2.50p, 2-5 @ 1.50p ea., 6-10 @ 1.00p ea., 11-24 @ 75p ea., 25-50 @ 40p ea.

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1-2 @ 2.50p, 3-5 @ 1.00p ea., 6-10 @ 75p ea., 11-30 @ 60p ea., 31-40 @ 50p ea., 41-60 @ 40p ea., 61-123 @ 30p ea.

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1 @ 1.00p, 2-5 @ 2.00p ea., 6-10 @ 1.50p ea., 11-13 @ 1.00p ea., 14-25 @ 75p ea., 26-28 @ 60p ea., 29-50 @ 50p ea.

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1 @ 2.00p, 2-5 @ 2.00p ea., 6-10 @ 1.50p ea., 11-20 @ 1.00p ea., 21-40 @ 75p ea., 41-75 @ 60p ea., 76-100 @ 50p ea., 101-145 @ 40p ea.

FUTURE TENSE:

1-35 @ 20p ea.

CAPTAIN AMERICA:

1-7, 9-13, 15, 16, 19-50 @ 20p ea.

MARVEL SUPER ADVENTURE:

2-28 @ 25p ea.

MARVEL ACTION:

1-15 @ 20p ea.

MARVEL TEAM UP:

1, 2, 4, 7-12, 14, 16-25 @ 30p ea.

VALUERS:

2-19 @ 30p ea.

ROCKY DOG:

1-5, 7, 8, 10-13, 16-20 @ 25p ea.

KID:

2, 3, 5, 6-13 @ 25p ea.

MONSTER MONTHLY:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 @ 50p ea.

SAVAGE BIRD OF CONAN:

9, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36-59 @ 50p ea.

MARVEL SUPERHEROES: Starring the Avengers and Captain Britain

357-389 @ 50p ea.

POCKET BOOKS

CHILLERS:

1-6, 4, 7, 9, 13, 15-28 @ 25p

FANTASTIC FOUR:

1, 5, 7, 10, 12-28 @ 25p ea.

STAR WARRIORS (X-Men):

1, 5, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19-28 @ 25p ea.

STAR WARRIORS:

5, 6, 10-28 @ 25p ea.

CONAN:

2, 4, 5, 6, 9-13 @ 20p ea.

KELLY:

2-13 @ 20p ea.

YOUNG ROMANCE:

1-6, 8-13 @ 20p ea.

TEENAGE:

4, 5, 7-13 @ 20p ea.

MARVEL CLASSICS:

1-12 @ 25p ea.

STAR WARS:

1-12 @ 25p ea.

DOCTOR WHO:

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cinema

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 @ 75p ea.

STARBURST

STARBURST: The Magazine of Film & TV Fantasy.

5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 21-42, 43, 44, 45,

46, 47, 48, 49 @ 75p ea.

RMARGE: (Starring The X-Men)

2-5, 7-10, 15, 17, 19, 20, 23, 26, 28-32,

34-51 @ 60p ea.

DOCTOR WHO: (Starring The X-Men)

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DOCTOR WHO: (Starring The X-Men)

THE ISLAND AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD



This 1973 movie, currently being re-released by Disney, is a curious production in many ways. For one thing it doesn't feel like an early 1970s movie, instead it seems to belong to the cycle of "Lost World" films that ran from the late 1950s to the middle of the 1960s. True, Milton Subotsky and John Dark relaunched the genre in 1975 with *The Land That Time Forgot* but their movies had a much more contemporary feel to them than this one.

Based on a 1961 novel called "The Lost Ones" by British writer Ian Cameron (real name Donald Gordon Payne) it's very much in the tradition of Jules Verne and Arthur Conan Doyle. In 1907 a rich Englishman, Sir Anthony Ross (played completely over-the-top by Donald Sinden who had the audience I saw it with falling about with laughter at lines that weren't supposed to be funny) pressgangs an American archaeologist (David Hartman) to accompany him on an expedition to search for his missing son at the North Pole. They travel to the Arctic Circle in an airship commanded by its unwilling designer Captain Brieux (Jacques Marin doing a "comic Frenchman" routine that also seems to date to a different cinema era).

It turns out that the son is trapped on a mysterious island inhabited by a lost tribe of Vikings. The island has remained concealed from the rest of the world by volcanic clouds which also serve to keep the island warm and lush. The Vikings understandably want to keep their sanctuary a secret and Sir Ross and his companions very nearly come to grief at the hands of their captors and are forced to flee for their lives...

The film is fine while it's dealing with the airship voyage to the island (as regular readers may remember I'm a great airship fan) and most of the airship stuff seems fairly convincing, with the exception of one silly sequence where the thing is made to fly low between some icebergs for no logical reason other than to create some excitement. But interest starts to flag once they reach the island itself and encounter the Vikings. At that point the movie turns into a rather routine chase adventure which follows a predictable course. The problem, I think, is that Vikings aren't exactly suitable material for a lost world story. Their way of life isn't strange and exotic enough to stir our sense of wonder — they're just a bunch of guys in furs and helmets who've been seen lots of times before in movies.

Not that this movie even lingers for a



Review by John Brosnan



moment on real Viking culture. Our heroes arrive, immediately get into trouble and are then on the run — the Vikings themselves serve only as a plot device. The island could have been inhabited by a tribe of lost Zulus and it wouldn't have made any difference to the structure of the story.

For me the most interesting aspect of the movie, apart from the airship, was that it's probably the most *studio-bound* production I've seen. This is particularly odd considering that it's set in the wide-open spaces of the Arctic Circle but I couldn't spot one shot where any of the principal cast members were on a genuine outside location. Sinden and company are virtually inserted into the action via travelling mattes, and most of the time not very convincingly.

The special effects as a whole vary wildly, but on the whole they look pretty cheap (or is

that these days we've been spoiled by expensive effects movies?). Some of Ellenshaw and Maley's matte paintings are impressive, such as in the Viking Village sequence, and also in the shots of the airship being moved out of its hangar in the dawn light. In fact the airship is always more impressive when it's being generated by paintings against real backgrounds than when the model crew take over later in the movie. Cheap budget or not I still resent having to look at all-too-visible wires holding up models...

Island at the Top of the World is, however, worth a visit if you're in an undemanding mood. It's a fast, relatively painless hour and a half which won't bore you even though you may wish that the script could have been a little meatier. And, of course, there is the airship.



Dario Argento, Italy's premier exponent of the horror/thriller film, has done it again.

Quite simply, *Tenebrae* is a *tour de force*. It reveals "The New Hitchcock" in impeccable form with a new found structural maturity and narrative complexity. Coupled with his world-renowned technical virtuosity, *Tenebrae* just dazzles the senses with a sheer driving momentum that is out of this world. It knocked me for six – but then all his films do on first viewing.

With *Tenebrae*, Argento returns to the sort of "giallo" film that made him famous in the early '70s. Gone are the phantoms and black magic demons conjured up in his last two films *Suspiria* and *Inferno*. They have been exorcised from his consciousness and replaced by a more personally felt modern fear. "To kill for nothing. That is the horror of today", explains Argento commenting on the genesis of *Tenebrae*.

Anybody expecting the third part of the Three Mothers trilogy, started by *Suspiria* and expanded upon in *Inferno*, will be in no doubt after the initial murder in *Tenebrae* that Argento is moving into a newer clinically aesthetic area of film-making. The first victim in *Tenebrae* is Ania Peroni, the actress who played the haunting but briefly glimpsed Mother of Tears in *Inferno*. As she dies, I think our hope of ever seeing the trilogy completed does too.

Tenebrae's images and themes are recurring ones from Argento's previous "giallo" phase – the sadist wearing black gloves and a writer impotently trapped in Rome from *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, the all-important but at first meaningless flashback from *Deep Red* and the possible perverse chromosomal make-up of the maniac as in *Cat O'Nine Tails*. One of Argento's favourite devices is here also, that of a would-be victim certain there is something not quite right about a crucial scene he has just witnessed. The major

omission from the usual Argento oeuvre is the lack of any subjective camerawork from the murderer's point of view. Obviously this was deemed irresponsible in the light of the seriousness with which Argento has approached his subject matter.

Argento got the idea for *Tenebrae* from something that happened to him while he was working on a script in Los Angeles. A fanatic had got hold of his telephone number and was continually pestering and tormenting him. Taking this experience to its logical alarming extension, he found he had the groundwork for the film's basic construction.

Like *Inferno*, *Tenebrae* begins with somebody quoting from a book. In this case the book is a detective novel called "Tenebrae" written by American writer Peter Neal, (Anthony Franciosa in the part originally conceived with Christopher Walken in mind), which is high in the Italian best-seller list. While the all important pivotal lines "he realised every human obstacle, every humiliation could be swept aside by this simple act of annihilation: Murder", are read out by the crazed maniac, Neal is on his way from New York to Rome for a series of press conferences. On arrival he is greeted by a threatening anonymous phone call and the news from Inspector Germani, (Giuliano Gemma), that a young shoplifter has been found with her throat slashed and her mouth stuffed with pages from his book. Suddenly Neal finds himself, with his agent (John Saxon) and his secretary (Dario Nicolodi – Mrs Argento), plunged into the centre of a series of senseless and apparently unrelated murders. The climactic and shattering bloodbath, which includes an homage to the final moments of *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, explains all, but there are more twists to this tale than you are at first led to believe.

Tenebrae is a sublimely involving yarn that doesn't once relax its grip. One is kept constantly on one's toes by the sheer volume of information provided by the very literate script and the ever-provoking camera that tends to give a new perspective on even mundane everyday objects. By having Conan

Dario Argento

Tenebrae



DO'S Tenebrae



Doyle quotations jostle with possibly sexually motivated red herrings, and in slanting the overpowering significance of a pair of red patent stiletto heels, Argento is obviously having a ball deflecting the truth from the audience. One of the characters, Tilde, a lesbian journalist played by Mirella D'Angelo, is given an argument with Neal about sexism and the violence against women in his books. It is an issue that Argento must have to deal with all the time and here, in the deftest way possible, he puts his personal views on the screen and successfully makes them a part of the unfolding mystery.

With *Tenebrae* Argento is reunited with his director of photography from *Suspiria*, Luciano Tovoli. Using a film stock (Kodak 300 ASA) that meant crystal clear definition without resorting to laboratory tampering which was all important to *Suspiria*'s final look, *Tenebrae*'s sharpness would seem to owe a lot to Zulawsky's *Possession*, one of Argento's favourite films.

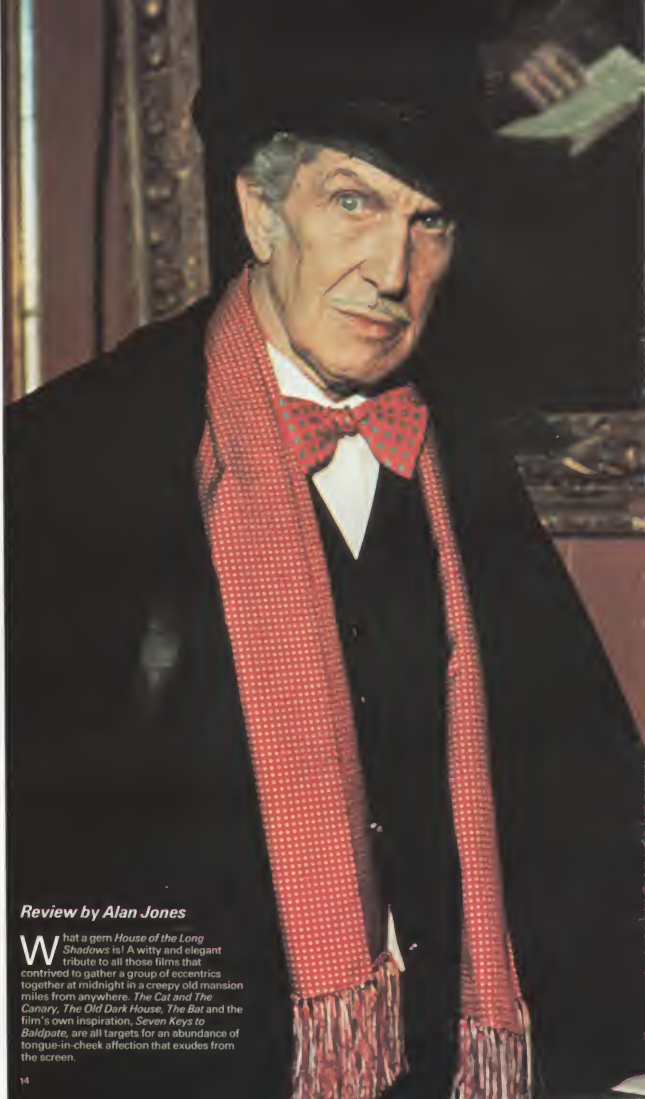
One expects at least one bravura set-piece from an Argento film, and the effects-laden climax aside where he knowingly comments on his own realism, here it is contained in a breath-taking sequence where we are shown a house from every conceivable angle in *one take*. The camera scales the walls, enters rooms, goes over the roof top and down the other side to bring into frame the murderer breaking in through a window. This is technical expertise at its most brilliant and was achieved by fixing the camera to the end of a Louma crane and manipulating it from a distance.

Costing three times less to make than *Inferno* and with a simpler score than usual from ex-Goblin members Simonetti, Pignatelli and Morante, *Tenebrae* is a superlative entertainment from one of the Italian film industry's brightest craftsmen who, sadly, rarely has his praises sung outside his native country.

I doubt whether this year will bring a more compelling, more satisfying or more emotionally charged high-tech contemporary nightmare than Dario Argento's magnificent *Tenebrae* ●

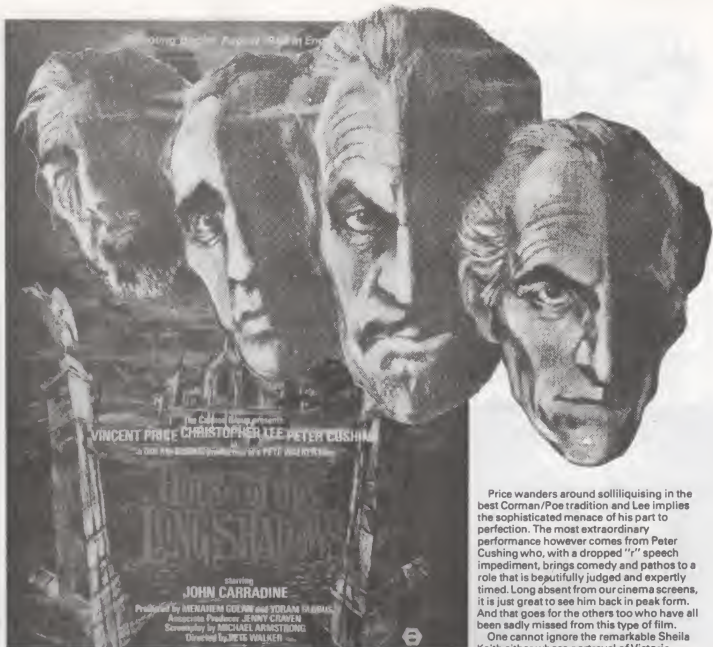


HOUSE OF THE LONG SHADOWS



Review by Alan Jones

What a gem *House of the Long Shadows* is! A witty and elegant tribute to all those films that contrived to gather a group of eccentrics together at midnight in a creepy old mansion miles from anywhere. *The Cat and The Canary*, *The Old Dark House*, *The Bat* and the film's own inspiration, *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, are all targets for an abundance of tongue-in-cheek affection that exudes from the screen.



But the main reason why *House of the Long Shadows* will be remembered for years to come, is because it stars for the first time the four great horror legends, Vincent Price, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing and John Carradine, in a film that does them all the justice they deserve. *House of the Long Shadows* is a mystery thriller that amuses a lot, has more than its fair share of scares and intrigues a great deal – enough, in fact, to make you wish it would start all over again the moment it has finished.

The less said about the story the better. Suffice to say that it concerns a wager between American writer Kenneth Magee (Desi Arnaz Jr) and his publisher Sam Allyson (Richard Todd) to the tune of twenty thousand dollars, that Magee can't write a typical horror thriller in 24 hours even if the proper surroundings were provided to give him inspiration. Magee says that he could easily knock a story out in that time and so, armed with his typewriter and the key to the Welsh country house of Baldpate Manor, sets off to prove him wrong. On the way there he stops at a bleak station to ask directions and is startled by a hooded stranger. But this is just a foretaste to all the other mysterious occurrences that are about to happen the moment he sets foot in the dark and forbidding house. Who are the bizarre couple who say they are the caretakers where none

should exist? Why is the dinner table set for seven? What are the terrible secrets Magee is about to uncover in the Grisbane ancestral home? And what does destiny hold for the guilt-ridden tarnished by a past unspeakable crime? All may not be what it appears but the answers to all these questions, and much, much more, are contained within the cunning walls of the house with the long shadows.

The ingredients successfully come together under Peter Walker who invests the strikingly lit proceedings with mood and atmosphere.

Michael Armstrong's clever script combines sharp characterisation with a marvellous sense of the melodramatic which everyone concerned rises to admirably. The four major stars are introduced one by one in superbly orchestrated entrances typified by Vincent Price, who strides through the darkened hallway of the manor and with a swirl of his cloak, he booms, "I have returned". It's easy to see why Price and his co-stars all wanted to appear in the film as the script sends up their personas shamelessly, but lovingly reaffirms them at the same time.

Price wanders around soliloquising in the best Corman/Poe tradition and Lee implies the sophisticated menace of his part to perfection. The most extraordinary performance however comes from Peter Cushing who, with a dropped "r" speech impediment, brings comedy and pathos to a role that is beautifully judged and expertly timed. Long absent from our cinema screens, it is just great to see him back in peak form. And that goes for the others too who have all been sadly missed from this type of film.

One cannot ignore the remarkable Sheila Keith either whose portrayal of Victoria Grisbane is delightfully deft but laced with a malevolence that is well and truly her own. She gets some of the biggest laughs with her running gag about her special recipe hot punch. Keith, a regrettably underused actress, chalks up another triumph in her long association with Pete Walker.

All these ingredients successfully come together under Pete Walker's direction who invests the strikingly lit proceedings with a persuasive mood and atmosphere. It's a different sort of film than we are used to from one of my favourite directors but one that proves again how really talented he is. My faith in his ability remains as unshaken today as it did all those years ago when I was on the edge of my seat in *House of Whipcord*. He doesn't betray his "Terror Film" roots entirely though as there are a couple of moments that are pure Walker in execution, especially the last murder, but to go into this in any great detail will give away far too much than I would wish to about the story.

Richard Harvey's musical score tempers the elements of parody perfectly and is instrumental in creating the spirit of the film from the very beginning.

There are so many reasons why you should see *House of the Long Shadows*. It is a film that should be greeted with fervent admiration by everybody, not just fans of the genre. It is an instant classic if ever there was one.

There can't be many films more eagerly awaited by horror fans this year than *House of the Long Shadows*. Not only does it star the four "Kings of Horror" Vincent Price, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing and John Carradine for the first time in cinematic history, but it also signals the re-emergence of one of the most important British genre directors of the lost decade. His name is Pete Walker and although he feels directors are very overrated and that he has "limited directorial ability", he has contributed to the Horror genre, or as he would prefer to call it, the terror genre, a series of very powerful films that were way ahead of the trend that made outrageous gore and inventive deaths respectable at the box-office. Now with early reports praising *House of the Long Shadows* as being the best film he has ever done and the one to finally establish his name, the time has come to re-appraise Walker's early films. Described as "A very elegant, witty and sophisticated Gothic mystery", *House of the Long Shadows* would seem to be a long way removed from Walker's films of the '70s because while other British horror product wallowed in cosy pseudo-Hammer cliché, Walker's films dealt resolutely with contemporary storylines aimed to shock and disturb, a talent he had learned in the field he had started out in—Sexploitation.



I Like Birds, *Stir Poker*, *School for Sex* and *For Men Only* all made money but then this lucrative field started moving towards the pornographic hardcore areas, "and I just wasn't interested. I'm actually quite conservative really as I do believe in censorship. I think films can deprave and corrupt. It is all a question of taste. I have stretched censorship to its limits and although a lot of critics won't agree with this, I think I have always been on the side of good taste."

Die Screaming Marianne, starring Susan George and made mainly on location in the Algarve in 1971 is the starting point for Walker's horror career. Using the experience he had gained while working on the crime dramas *The Big Switch* and *Man of Violence* it was a borderline suspense thriller, written by Murray Smith, concerning the efforts of Marianne's father, "The Judge", to extract from her the number of his late wife's Swiss bank account, as it not only contains £700,000 but damning evidence of his corrupt practices while in office. Practically everyone dies either by method or accident but what one can perceive through the virtually incomprehensible plot is the recurring themes that will crop up in later Walker films: the death of the personable hero, the predatory half-sister or more obviously the weakness of the male sex and the dominant female. *Die Screaming Marianne* has a tense and ominous



HOUSE OF THE LONG SHADOWS — THE TERROR FILM CAREER OF PETE WALKER by Alan Jones



beginning but the scene that really works is Barry Evans trapped in a seedy Soho apartment with two villains masquerading as policemen. The scene is very Hitchcockian in execution but as Walker, who is a great Hitchcock fan and would later be dubbed "the new British Hitchcock" by various members of the press, says, "We are all doing what the master did 20 years ago. It isn't just Brian De Palma who is guilty—we all are."

In 1972 came *The Flesh and Blood Show*, written by Alfred Shaughnessy, which utilised the 3-D concept used earlier that same year for *The Four Dimensions of Greta* which took everyone by surprise by becoming an enormous success. Walker had found a camera mouldering away in an old studio and discovered it was one that could be used in the anaglyph process of 3-D filming in which the audience wore cardboard glasses with red and green plastic lenses. In *The Flesh and Blood Show* the excuse for using this gimmick was the flashback sequence at the climax that explained who or what was killing off the out-of-work actors assembled together in a seaside pier theatre. What horror there is in the film is dissipated by the obligatory sexual content and the appalling continuity but as unfulfilled as the film is, one can see *The Flesh and Blood Show* as the logical step toward the Grand Guignol of two years later.

**Pete Walker's complete
filmography**

I Like Birds (1966)
For Men Only (1966)
The Big Switch (1967)
School For Sex (1968)
Man of Violence (1969)
Cool it Carol (1970)
Die Screaming Marianne (1971)
Four Dimensions of Greta (1972)
The Flesh and Blood Show (1971)
Tiffany Jones (1973)
House of Whipcord (1974)
Frightmare (1974)
House of Mortal Sin (1975)
Schizo (1976)
The Comeback (1977)
Home Before Midnight (1978)
House of the Long Shadows (1983)

In 1974 Walker made *House of Whipcord* for the modest amount of £60,000. "I have good ideas for the concept of films and Whipcord was my best. Modern Gothique stories are what I prefer as there is more horror to be had out of people's minds. Normal people who behave abnormally, that's the common denominator in all my films." *House of Whipcord*, written by David McGillivray, is a minor masterpiece of suspense that utilises Hitchcock's Psycho device of killing the heroine when the audience least expects it. It also achieves an edge of the seat nailbiting atmosphere as it tells the story of how model Anne-Marie (Penny Irving) becomes imprisoned in an official correction centre run by the manic Mrs Wakehurst using her blind husband, a retired Justice of the Peace as a pawn to make sure that all the inmates eventually die. Solitary confinement follows flogging culminating in death by hanging and nobody escapes. The tension mounts due to Walker's superb use of a trick beginning and the horror comes not from the more explicit corrective sequences but from our sympathies with Anne-Marie, the fact that anybody could get caught up in such a tangibly real situation beyond their control. This was also the film in which Walker's discovery, actress Sheila Keith, made her debut and she was a revelation. Here as a warden she is the epitome of perverted evil. "Sheila is an actress



who never needs direction. Anyone who knows my films will realise by now that she always has something to do with the explanation. I thought she was going a bit over the top in *The Comeback* but she was injecting a certain amount of humour that actually made the part work better."

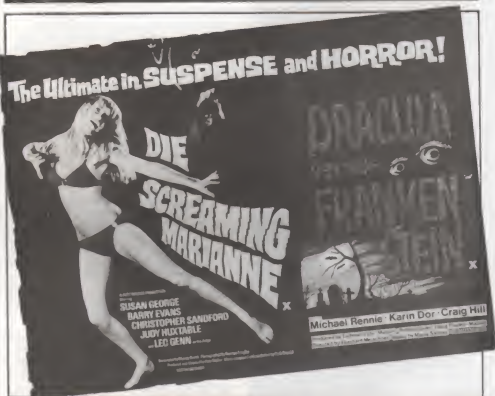
Quoting David McGillivray, "*House of Whipcord* was my big break and my best film. I wrote it in two weeks for £200, there were no re-writes and by sheer accident it turned out superbly. I say sheer accident because there was no reason why it should have worked as well as it did. It was the first horror film I'd ever written and it was Pete Walker's first pure horror film and he used all mainly untried actors. I never tire of watching it and in my opinion it deserves to become a horror classic due to its claustrophobic and unnerving atmosphere." McGillivray subsequently wrote Walker's next three films.

Frightmare followed but on the heels of *House of Whipcord* and starred Sheila Keith as Dorothy Yates committed to an asylum in 1957 for cannibalism. She is eventually acquitted and certified sane but her craving still persists despite her daughter supplying her with animal brains and pretending they're human. Edmund Yates, effectively played by Rupert Davies, impotently watches as Dorothy resumes her practice of advertising Tarot card readings



and despatching the callers with blood-crazed relish via red hot pokers and pitchforks. Walker believes this to be his best film and he's right. Compelling and intense it is Britain's answer to *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Walker's bleak and chilling vision of the triumph of evil over good is contained in the shattering climax where Jackie, (Deborah Fairfax - Walker's best heroine to date), sees her boyfriend's brains drilled out with a Black & Decker and watches while her mother and sister close in on her with a meat cleaver. "Evil triumphing over good is probably my comment on life today. People get away with everything. I think in some ways I pioneered this downbeat ending trend. I want an audience to come out of a theatre thinking and feeling frustrated." The horror contained in *Frightmare* had the mainstream critics apoplectic and they launched on the film with such vehemence that Walker decided to use the quotes on posters and advertising the film both here and in America. "The critics write for their readers little realising that most audiences love horror films whether on the level of high camp or just as a frightening release. As the critics see more of my films and as I meet them at press show, I think they appreciate more what I am trying to achieve". *Frightmare* crystallised Walker's directional style and put him ahead as a major force working in the horror field.

If the critics hated *Frightmare* then they were





certainly more shocked by the central theme of Walker's next film. Added to this was the *Sunday People's* "shocking" front page expose that actual human blood was used for the murder sequences, failing to add that a lot of movies have used real blood for special effects. The film was *House of Mortal Sin*, (The Confessional in the U.S.), and it was released in 1976 by Columbia-Warner. Peter Cushing was first offered the part of Xavier Meldrum who as a priest with 30 years of celibacy behind him, sublimates his desires by breaking the ethic of the confessional and morally torturing his distressed victims with guilt. Anybody trying to stop this course of "divine justice" is murdered by such diverse means as incense burners, suffocation, scolding and poisoned holy wafers. "Cushing wanted to play the part but at that time made it a policy not to play villains. Now after *Star Wars* of course that is no longer true. Also any picture he appeared in seemed to invoke the Hammer name and I never wanted a picture of mine to have that sort of sell." Anthony Sharp eventually played the role and gave a tremendous performance equally matched by Sheila Keith's housekeeper sparring a black eye-patch and secretly harbouring her jilted love for Meldrum from 30 years before. It is this character who decides on the double suicide pact that gives the film its clever twist. "I don't think *House of Mortal Sin* achieved what I wanted it to. Somewhere there is a very serious film to make about the subject. I mean, what do these priests do? I grew up with this Roman Catholic background and it is a lot of rubbish. Anthony Sharp came from this background too and he found the scene where he kills his bedridden mother with the holy sacrament very distasteful indeed". Despite some plot contrivances that don't logically follow through, *House of Mortal Sin* is Walker's best use of the theme of a respected public person using their position to pass moral judgement on those they see as corrupt.

Schizo saw a departure from the usual Walker storyline, "It was less Gothic. I wanted less incident and outrage. Schizo was an attempt to level off the Gothic and make things a little more threatening than over the top. It was purposely underwritten and I see it as an improvement in an area I wanted to move into." Walker at the time of the film's release stated that no one would guess the killer's identity. Set in this straight thriller format, he was wrong, it was obvious right from the start who the schizophrenic was. The basic fault with Schizo is that Walker was more concerned with hiding his identity that he fills the screen with elaborately set up red herrings and literally bends the plotline to fit his needs. Flashbacks that lie are a staple Hitchcockian device that unfortunately didn't work in this context. The only moment of real horror is when Queenie Watts receives a knitting needle through her head. Schizo marked the parting of the ways between Walker and writer McGillivray. It also significantly did not feature Sheila Keith even though Lynne Frederick was excellent as the seemingly persecuted Samantha Gray. Former pop star John Leyton as Samantha's newlywed husband was atrocious and Walker has this to say about his male leads. "What you have to remember is that the parts aren't particularly good for men. They have to pretend to be slightly inept, like Paul Greenwood in *Frightmare*, otherwise they'd be rushing to the rescue far too early. John Leyton isn't a great actor and it wasn't much of a part for him. Women do dominate in my films also, another comment of mine on the times, and I've always had most difficulty directing them. Perhaps it is my fault that I haven't got strong performances from my male leads but I need to play them down from the point of view of the plot." Schizo was released by Columbia-Warner in 1976 ►



and the artwork they used for the poster was not what Walker had in mind. "I wasn't happy with the soft sell they gave it. The major releasing companies have no idea how to sell an exploitation film at all. In America we opted for a new company to release the film and their campaign was worse." In Britain a lot of people objected to the poster and its glib definition of Schizophrenia, "when the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing", so much so that this was eventually removed from the artwork.

1978's *The Comeback* started life as *I Woke Up Screaming*, became *The Sixth Gate of Hell*, while it was being shot sported *The Day the Screaming Stopped* until *The Comeback* was eventually chosen. "I thought all the other titles were too down market and catchpenny, I wanted something classier." Ringo Starr was the first consideration for the role of Nick Cooper who stages a comeback in the recording industry under the auspices of David Doyle as Webster Jones. Then Cat Stevens was suggested until - "I saw Jack Jones on TV in a 'Macmillan and Wife' episode and I thought he was terrific. I also needed a name Americans would know and as soon as he read the script he became very keen to do it."

"Walker believes *The Comeback* to be his most technically adept film to date. The film is also a fusion of the Gothique elements found in his earlier films within the thriller/whodunnit formula he has recently favoured. Add to this Jack Jones' winning performance, a script by Murray Smith with nods to David McGilivray's excellent style and another finely etched performance from Sheila Keith who nobody is surprised to find trying to drive Jack Jones mad

due to her daughter's suicide when he retired the first time and whose body she keeps mummified in the attic surrounded by posters and trinkets of her former idol, and you have a film branded with considerable merit.

Until *House of the Long Shadows*, Walker had been involved with a number of other projects, only one of which saw the light of day, *Home before Midnight* which was a return to softcore exploitation with its rivetingly sensational story of underage schoolgirl sex. There was the sequel to the American box-office success *Dogs*, called *Cats*, and his co-written script with Michael (Mark of the Devil) Armstrong called *Deliver Us From Evil* that looked all set to shoot in Mexico with Rock Hudson. At one stage he was also the director of the infamous *Sex Pistols* film, called in Michael Armstrong's penned script, *A Star is Dead*. He also wanted to do a rock version of the classic story of *Svengali*. "It was a script that was a good idea and Columbia showed some interest but I didn't see it as a Terror story although it did involve a certain amount of cellars and sleaze. We were after name songwriters to do the score but the whole project seems unlikely now even though the concept is just as relevant as it was in Victorian Paris".

House of the Long Shadows is the first film that Walker hasn't produced himself and its genesis was due to producers Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus, owners of the Cannon Classic group of cinemas. They were looking for a suitable vehicle in which to star the four horror legends and they made overtures to Pete Walker and his associate producer Jenny Craven who immediately took

up the challenge. Attempts had been made before to unite the four actors in one film but it was a move they had always resisted, not liking the scripts they were offered. At first the idea was to do a remake of *The Old Dark House* but the rights proved difficult to obtain, so Walker screened one of his favourite films, the 1947 *Seven Keys to Baldpate* and the idea sprang from there. There have already been five versions of the classic novel by Earl Derr Biggers, that George M. Cohan turned into a successful play, but writer Michael Armstrong says it is not a remake but a "reworking of the basic premise coupled with one of the novel's twist endings. To that we added a lot of style and literacy and purposely filled it with a plethora of references for film buffs to pick up on. It really is a pastiche of all those '30s and '40s creepies." A treatment was written overnight followed by a script two weeks later and all four principals said they would do it because of its sense of humour. Other stars added were Walker stalwart Sheila Keith, Desi Arnaz Jr and Richard Todd and filming took five weeks in the cramped location of a Hampshire stately home.

And the result is in Armstrong's estimation "A film to feel affection for with Pete Walker at his most enthusiastic due to a supportive crew and the best actor's he's ever worked with." "Perhaps I haven't done as well as I've liked in the past", says Walker, "as I didn't have unlimited funds for my films but I've always strived for a certain standard. There are always compromises of course but the skill, if I have any skills at all, is not to let them show."

(Parts of this interview have already been published in the fanzine "Dark Horizons")

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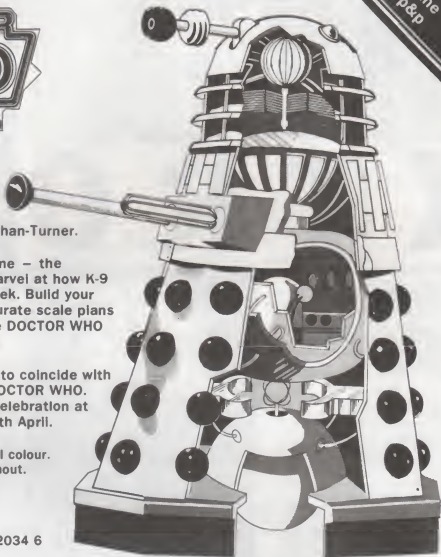
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XTRO

Review by Alan Jones

Xtro has a certain timeliness on its side in reminding us that the norm for pre-E.T. extra-terrestrials were as harbingers of death and destruction. Apart from redressing that balance, and some occasional flashes of tangential inspiration in a plot that runs the gamut of genre influences from *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* to *Alien*, *Xtro* is really nothing very xtro-ordinary.

It starts off very well indeed. Sam (Philip Sayer) is playing with his eight year old son Tony (Simon Nash) in the garden of their country cottage. He throws a stick in the air and as it suddenly explodes, the day turns to night in an instant and he is whisked away by a blinding white light. So far, so good. But when Sam returns to earth three years later as a humanoid monster with some pretty revolting habits, the film charts a now very predictable course indeed. Victim after victim meet a gruesome death in the master plan to subvert Tony to his unearthly ways, one that also involves turning his wife Rachel (Bernice Stegers) into a surrogate mother for the clones of his son reproduced with the aid of the au pair (Maryam D'Abo), cocooned in the bathroom.

I can't say *Xtro* scared me or even disgusted me to any great extent, even though Francis Coates and Tom Harris' special effects are minor miracles of ingenuity for their low budget. This is probably due to producer Mark Forstater wanting to go for a cleaner look than one achieved with an easier physical gross out. Nevertheless, particularly gasp-worthy is Sam's re-birth in human form after the impregnation of a young girl with one of the creature's more mysterious hidden tentacles. This scene will apparently be an even more direct full frontal assault on the senses in the print destined for Japanese shores. Christopher Hobbs design for the initial alien life-form will hardly fool anybody into believing it is anything other than what it is — a trained mime artist bent over backwards on all fours wearing a prosthetic





suit. It is just as well it is glimpsed at only briefly. Far more successful is the climactic deformed figure which was manipulated by Hobbs himself using basic hand puppet techniques.

Directed by Harry Bromley Davenport, a resourceful director if ever there was one as his debut film *Whispers of Fear* proved, *Xtro* is a competent if slack clothesline to hang a catalogue of grisly murders on. I would like to have seen more characterisation, but perhaps Davenport and Michel Parry's original screenplay had this eliminated in favour of more incident added by Robert Smith and Iain Cassie. Not that any of the actors help to this end either, especially Bernice Stegers who I felt was horribly miscast, or the very Britishness of their performances. I felt more for Tony's pet snake Harry who gets himself hammered to a pulp than I did for any one of the people on the screen.

Some of the fleshing out from the more obvious "alien on the rampage" format however is reasonably intriguing. I liked Tony's ability to bring his toys to life with especial regard to his action man who goes on manoeuvres to murder the complaining downstairs neighbour which is a nicely warped added touch of the bizarre. As for the yo-yo that sprouts knife edges and whirls into a life of its own, I don't feel its imagery was fully realised unlike its evident inspiration – the silver globe in *Phantasm*.

Still, the film is beautifully shot by John Metcalfe and I applaud Forstater and Davenport (who, in the style of John Carpenter, also wrote and performed the electronic soundtrack) for trying so earnestly to resuscitate low budget exploitation sf/horror films in this country. I can appreciate all the problems and just what it must have taken in terms of sheer hard work to put *Xtro* on the screen.

But quite honestly, on a comparative level, I much preferred *Inseminoid*. *Xtro*'s potential was enormous but as it stands it is brilliant in one area only and that is its consistent mediocrity – and that's a shame ●

THE EVIL DEAD SPEAK



Evil Dead director Sam Raimi and producer Phil Edwards with Alan Jones

Starburst: What did you think of the reception of the film last night?

Sam Raimi: Incredible! It's hard to know how much is for your film and how much is for the event, though. Well, if you're there every night (and we've been to about three festivals in a row), you'd know that if the audience did not like your film they'd just boo it off the screen or it would disappear under a barrage of paper planes and they'd be screaming "Reimburse! Reimburse! Reimburse!"

S.R.: "Reimburse?" That's the most dreaded of things probably.

But you kept getting "We won! We won!" all the way through.

S.R.: "We won?"

Yeah... every time one of the kids got killed.

Robert Tappert: They're meaning they won, the crowd, because they got what they wanted?

Yes. When there's blood, what they're actually chanting is "Blood, Blood!" you really are dealing with the basest response. But did you make the film for that audience?

S.R.: Well we really made the film for the drive-in crowds originally, and the Detroit crowd. We wanted a film that would stop people kissing in their cars and turn their attention to the screen.

R.T.: You know, the 42nd street audience.

S.R.: Since we don't get any girls we figured it was only fair that we make a film so that other people don't get them either! They're bothered enough by the film that they can't keep kissing and necking. Is it because that was the only distribution you thought you'd get—a drive-in?

R.T.: We made it originally for that market and then we had some vague understanding of an overseas market; just that you could make sales overseas somehow.

How did you put it together? Where did the money come from?

R.T.: Sam and myself have one other partner who is the lead actor in the film, Bruce Campbell. We decided to make a feature-length film, and going about setting it up after then we contacted a lawyer

producer Robert Tappert in conversation
at the Paris Fantasy Film Festival.

to draw up a legal package which we could take to investors. Sam had already written the screenplay for *Evil Dead* so he wrote a thirty minute condensed version of not the same story but some of the same elements that we did as a Super 8 movie. Then with the legal thing the lawyers had drawn up and the Super 8 movie we'd go to people and ask them to invest—it was a very long process but eventually we raised enough money to start shooting.

How much did it cost?

R.T.: About \$420,000 altogether, but we were constantly raising money for about three years.

You've been working on it for 3 years?

S.R.: Yes, with long breaks in between for blowing up film from 16mm to 35, we were stopped for months at a time without any money so we'd have to go out again and raise money and begin again. We really were halted many times.

R.T.: And not having enough money makes it all very slow; we had to do all the work.

So what's your background; it's a raw film, very assured, very flashy.

S.R.: Yeah... flashy's easy, probably.

You think so?

S.R.: Yes. Probably

Well there's a million other drive-in movies to show you're wrong.

S.R.: Well we've made a bunch of Super 8 films before this, so we've had a lot of experience in making comedies. Although before we made a horror film I'd never moved a camera too much, just set it up where you can see everything, film and do your comedy in front of it. Then if you can't see the whole joke, or it's funnier to stop and show it a little clearer then we'd decide to cut and move the camera somewhere else. Actually that's probably how I still do it, come to think of it, but the earlier ones had no flash to them, they were all just the content. This horror thing certainly has no higher aspirations, the content is just flash—it's very visual, but certainly not intelligent. So it was a conscious decision to make the content, and the presentation, of the content both a visual experience. ►



What do you think of the film now?

R.T.: I'm ready to make another one.

Another horror picture or another movie?

R.T.: Another movie. The next one has elements of horror. Elements of horror but it's not horror, it's more a mystery thing, but it's still along the same lines. That is, it's kind of a *wildy*; it sets out to entertain you with a better story though.

Is it connected to *Evil Dead* in any way or is it a totally separate thing?

S.R.: Totally separate.

I remember reading somewhere it said you were going to do three, a trilogy.

S.R.: No, I don't think so. To tell you the truth, I have got the outline for the sequel, in case *Evil Dead* makes a lot of money. I've always hated sequels, I really don't like them but suddenly I'm on the end where it's possible. It would really have to be profitable, not in the financial sense, but a really good movie to merit doing that.

But *Evil Dead*'s cult status is assured, so you'll probably have to come up with something else.

R.T.: But everyone else has gone on to do sequels... well, I guess Hooper never did a sequel to...

He's doing it! He's doing it now in 3D.

R.T.: A sequel to...?

Texas Chainsaw 23D, it's called.

S.R.: 23D? Oh no! I guess it's a business.

Yeah, it is a business. But how do you feel about trying to repeat the success of the formula?

S.R.: I wouldn't want to do that.

It's really boring to go to the movies and see for example *Halloween 2*; think of part 2, part 3, part 28 or whatever and it's so unoriginal, it's so unimaginative! What other pictures do you want to make besides horror movies?

S.R.: Besides horror movies? Everything.

How long did it take you to do the end sequence all the stop-motion?

S.R.: That I have to credit to the two special effects men. They were working for weeks and weeks and I'd just stop by and say "Hey! Going great fellers. Looks swell!" We were editing at the time. I had story boards and they basically shot and moved everything themselves, which is strange because that's how I

feel the big guys work, but for us it's really weird not to do everything for ourselves. Not being the person spitting the blood through the tubes and everything. You did all that?

S.R.: Not me! I spat blood once.

R.T.: I spat five gold crowns worth!

S.R.: It's really horrible stuff, we would put it in our mouths and I'd say "O.K. blood blowers, drink the blood", and they'd drink the blood, then I'd stop and think of something else to do. Sometimes I'd forget about them and they can't really speak because they've got a mouthful of karro syrup. First you fill up the tube and then you fill up your mouth with that extra little punch of blood then you go "fffssthhh" and just let it fly. It's great!

R.T.: There's a big field out there, besides horror. So what's this quote of yours saying you want to be the new Spielberg?

S.R.: I don't know, I never said that! I really admire the guy but I would never be so eudecious as to say anything like that.

Now about this five bucks that Stephen Spielberg owes me. I'm a little upset at him because he does owe me five bucks. I was out in California and I thought I'd see him again so I lent it to him but, er... I guess that's what happens when you're a superstar. What do you think of Spielberg's movies?

S.R.: I really like them, I love 'em.

R.T.: I think he's great, and he's really underrated because he's so big, nobody talks about him. He's so big and his films are so popular... I don't read much criticism. The critics had a field day with 1941.

S.R.: But there, more than anywhere, I think he was just so unreserved as to giving his all out to entertain.

R.T.: Although everything went wrong.

S.R.: It just didn't hit the right key for some reason. 1941 is a terrific movie for the first hour and a half and then it's just too much, its like it's a Mad, Mad World which starts insane and just stays there.

S.R.: I enjoyed it for what it was but I felt that the comedy didn't exactly come across. Somewhere they felt that bigger was funnier and it's hard to know. It's always hard to know, in *Evil Dead* too.

The Hills Have Eyes poster—what's it doing in the film? Do you like Wes Craven?

S.R.: Yeah... well I don't know if I like him, I have a





love/hate relationship with him because he hurt me—I want to see *Hills Have Eyes* and I walked out and was crouched over 'cause my stomach was in such great pain, it was horrible. So I felt that that film really affected me. I guess I really love it.

It's a fun movie, The Hills Have Eyes, and the more you see it the better it gets. But it's not really a horror movie. It's more an adventure movie.

S.R.: Isn't it! That's the first time in thirty years that someone has cheered for the dog. So the poster is just there?

S.R.: No, there's a real reason. In *The Hills Have Eyes* these crazies come into their trailer and they do the most horrible acts of violence I ever saw committed on film, but it's great, I mean it's all in fun. They're killing people; stabbing them; they bite the heads off a parakeet and drink it like a cocktail—it was so wild. Then they wonder if they should kill the baby or raise it as their own or eat it 'cause it's good meat. After they leave, the *forme*/people come back in the place and there, among all the carnage, one of the things you see is a poster of the *Jaws* monster ripped in half and it's like Craven saying "This *Jaws* monster, as horrible as it was, is just pop horror—but this is real horror that has taken that pop horror and ripped it to shit because this is an actual nightmare happening here. Like when you have a mirror in a film, repeating what my professor said: I said to him "Why does Bergman have all those mirrors in his films," and he said "Well, to show that what's happening in the story is real, he's just showing you levels of reality and that the mirror you can relate more to the story because what you attribute to illusion is taking place in the mirror as opposed to the film itself." Well, I'm just repeating what he said. However in this case it applies because the *Jaws* creature is just pop art, this is real horror. So in *Evil Dead*, just as a joke really, and for those that like *The Hills Have Eyes*, take his poster and tear it in half and say "That's just Pop—this is horror!" I don't think there's really anything new in *Evil Dead*.

The individual elements aren't fresh and original but it's the way they're presented. The thing that I really like about it is the fact that it's gory and graphic as it is, it's not objectionable, it's not disturbing. What about the actors? They were very convincing.

S.R.: I went to high school with Bruce and Ellen, that's Ellen Sanways...

R.T.: The one in the trapdoor.

S.R.: Her and the guy with the black hair, I went to school with those two and we were always in plays together. We'd make Super 8 films, Bruce would always star in them and Ellen always had a part in them, so it was the natural progression that she was in this. Then the other three...

R.T.: We just dug them up in the Detroit area, literally. They were doing commercials and things like that and it was very hard getting actors and actresses because it's a car town. We were shooting during the big auto company presentation and everyone wanted to work for a week and earn 700 maybe 800 dollars doing the auto shows, they can tour the country and that, so... finally, we settled on these three people. They went through, I have to say, an incredible amount of hard work. The make-up was uncomfortable, the contacts they were wearing covered almost half your eyeball so they were fighting blind at times, all beyond the call of duty. One guy wasn't even looking for a break, it was his last fling as an actor.

When you say the production was over three years, you don't mean the actors were around all during that time. You obviously filmed the actors in a block.

R.T.: Really, we were done with all the principles, all except for Bruce where we picked up, in about nine weeks. Of actual shooting and camera work, it probably took about eleven weeks. We had a whole lot of footage and no money to even get a movie to look at it.

S.R.: Instead of dailies we had, er...

Monthlies?

S.R.: Weeklies. Except for the final two weeks.

R.T.: Right. And suddenly we had all this film. Incredible amount of film.

S.R.: That was really wild because basically it's like these boxes came from the labs. It was strange when they were sitting on that counter because they were the last twenty minutes of the movie and it was as if someone had said "O.K., you're done—here's what your movie's going to be folks." Like they were giving us our movie, it was such a giant chunk. We were now in a totally different place in our homes in Detroit and er... it was like a gift, it was that strange, I don't know how to explain it.

What was your shooting ratio on it?

S.R.: Ah... it was pretty high, about fifteen to one.

R.T.: But when you're dealing with special effects it's hard to say what your shooting ratio is because you may run the camera for four minutes before the actual effect takes place, in case something goes wrong—you don't want to miss the whole thing. And then it does go wrong, so you film it again a couple of times. It's the fact that these people have on so much make-up and the contact lenses; no matter how many times you've blocked it out they'd get out of frame a little bit.

S.R.: Also the fact that we were shooting with hundred foot loads too, more than half the film was shot with hundred foot loads.

Is the house a set, or is it actually a real house?

R.T.: It was actually that house but when we got there literally, there was nothing in it. There was a couple of walls that we took out. The floor is all broken through, it had been unused for a long time, thirty years maybe, the cows wandered in there, they'd been there for a long time so we had to shovel it all out.

S.R.: It was this high with murene. Well, actually the Tennessee Film Commission had a location and the day before we went down they cancelled out on us. So we went down there anyway and started shooting the driving footage, finally we found another location. We took out some walls and pulled off the ceiling so we could make a little studio out of it.

How big was the crew altogether?

R.T.: Oh, I think fourteen, crew and cast. But it fluctuated. A couple of people would come down for three weeks, a professor of Sam's, his brother, my sister, so they'd do several things—settle, etc.

S.R.: Bloodblowers!

R.T.: Run to the store to get this, do that.

Who finally did back the film?



R.T.: Oh, a bunch of doctors and lawyers, business people who had money that they'd be willing to risk—not to risk 'cause I mean there's no tax write-off in the States, there's no advantage in putting something in a film and losing money—it was people who had money for stocks that they'd be willing to play with somewhat.

So who's paying for all your trips around the continents of the world?

S.R.: Well, the London Film Festival paid for part of it.

So it's not costing you anything to...

S.R.: Yes! It's costing us plenty. We've got to work actually, for a few months, I'd say about two months to afford each of these trips.

When you say work, that's not film work?

S.R.: Right.

R.T.: No, it's film work.

S.R.: Mmm... O.K. Shining hub caps for commercials!

That's great, though. I don't mean it's great that you have to shine hub caps but it's not glamorous. You've just gone out and done it, and you're going to get very successful by doing it.

S.R.: I'm glad you like it 'cause there's a job shining hub caps over in Detroit this week while I'm away! You're going to inspire a lot of people, I really think that's important. There's usually about ten years between these films normally, and I haven't seen a film like yours since Texas Chainsaw.

R.T.: We have friends who have done what we've been doing and maybe shot a trailer and got a legal package, gone out and now they're making a movie. S.R.: But a good tip for a young film maker is to make films in Super 8 like ourselves. It's such a wonderful medium because you have the camera, the film, sound and you can get a light and put someone in front of it and it's the exact same thing. You don't have Dolby stereo but you don't need that. You don't have Dolby stereo! You learn how to edit and compose. It should be that you can make a film as good as you can in 35mm or 90% as good in Super 8. Once you can do that, even if it's a five minute film it should cost you around fifty American bucks.

What you're saying is, if you want to make films then just go out there and make them.

S.R.: Yeah, 'cause it doesn't have to be for mass markets. I've been very content as a film maker, making films in Super 8 and I'm certainly not profiting from it financially, maybe I will some day. It doesn't mean anything to me when I'm sleeping to know that in England someone is watching the film. I hope whoever watches it, enjoys it but I can only gain so much more by... it's like I can't imagine in my mind past a hundred, I can imagine a hundred different things and then I can't imagine anymore than that. So, it's just the idea that someone is watching it, they could just as well be watching another film and it wouldn't mean anything. It's like when you're with the crowd it means something. What I mean to say is though I may sound very cold and callous, but for young film makers, it's more important that they make movies. I know that they'll say it's easy for me to say having done it, but it's true. If I couldn't make any more films in 35mm I'd keep making them in Super 8, although I wouldn't be quite as happy because I do get to see the world and meet very interesting people, like yourselves.

R.T.: And you do get to entertain a much larger audience.

But the Evil Dead is a movie for an audience, it's not a movie for you. Surely that making movies for people and not for yourselves?

S.R.: Yes. Although it is for myself in as much as I like to be in a crowd. That's when it matters. That's why last night was such a big thrill because of the incredible crowd—really wild.

Was it sophisticated equipment that you used on the film or was it just as crude as rushing forward with the camera?

S.R.: It was that crude. We had a few devices.

How did you get that shot over that car, when the camera went hurtling through the woods and straight over the back of the car?

S.R.: For that one we had a camera mounted on a fifteen foot long two-by-four and two people on

either end. The centre of the camera was like the axis point so it moved the least; the guys can move a great deal and the camera moves very little and they were just very smooth, and we used a wide angle lens, rushed up to the car and lifted the camera over.

We saw Amityville 2 on the same morning that we saw Evil Dead and of course there's exactly the same shot in it as your film where the camera goes over the back of a character's head...

R.T.: It's kind of an upsetting shot though...

It's disturbing...

S.R.: People asked how we did that shot—I wouldn't want to do it again. I was hanging by my knees from the rafters of the cabin upside down! It was the most incredible thing.

This is exactly what I mean about the way you approach the film. Most people think you need sophisticated equipment and you don't. You just need the imagination to carry it out. We're sleaze merchants really, we see everything. It's so rare these days to find something that really leaps out at you. They go into the cinema hoping they're going to see something like your sort of film delivers. They don't stop even after films like Friday the 13th, they keep going back because sooner or later they know they're going to see something really worthwhile.

R.T.: We were in the same league, I think because when we made this we went to hundreds of horror films and decided the cardinal sin of a horror film is to bore the audience...

Right?

R.T.: The second you bore them, that's where you go wrong. Even if they're laughing or screaming or anything else it's O.K. But the second they go "Oh... make something happen!" that's where you go wrong. You can still go to the sleaze pits to see horror films in the hope that maybe this one, or that one will be good.

Exactly. You always hope it will be. Like in your film, once you've set up the premise you just don't stop. Although sometimes it's a bit dull—like when Bruce crashes into the same bookshelf twice.

S.R.: If we could do that again, we'd do it! I'm surprised the audience didn't break out laughing at that, they always do in America, they scream and laugh.

What sort of audiences have you shown it to in America?

S.R.: Um...

I mean it hasn't played anywhere has it?

S.R.: Well we've had sneaks for the investors.

Yeah... and what's the reaction been?

S.R.: Good. Well, no. I don't know how the investors took it the first time.

R.T.: They didn't know what it was! They said, "Well this isn't horror as we thought", it's a little too funny to be horror, they thought.

S.R.: One investor was really mad. "Why didn't you tell me you were making a comedy!"

I think it works on both levels. All that with the monster under the trapdoor all the time is such a good idea.

S.R.: I like that too—that's a lot of fun; I like the way that there's always a danger in the room.

And the way that they almost ignore it after a while as they're so preoccupied with their own problems.

Another cardinal rule which I don't think you really broke is that in most horror films everybody acts in a totally illogical manner. "You wait here and I will go into this dark place." It happens in Evil Dead but it's acceptable, it doesn't break the rule, "It's an animal downstairs," I think that works.

R.T.: The girl walking out in the woods doesn't.

S.R.: No, that's stretching it there, I say that because people all scream and I don't think they accept it. People say to me "Why did she go out in the woods?"

She's somehow being called by this thing, she's not possessed or anything like that, but just more than curiosity, she's just drawn by the thing. Well, that works. She would have more curiosity than the others because she found herself doing that drawing of the thing and therefore has already had an encounter with it.

R.T.: Right. And she looks at that drawing, picks it up and walks to the window then walks outside.



What's your excuse for the scene where the tree roots thrust between her legs? It doesn't mean anything to me but a lot of people might say that it's sexist. What's your argument or justification?

S.R.: Well, I don't know what I'm justifying here. I just look at that as another element of the horror, however I have to say in my ignorance that it seems to affect people in a way I don't want it to. I realise that gets more personal to women. If I would shoot the movie again that's something I would change. You see you shoot someone's head being cut off one day, the next day someone's arm is being bitten off, the next day the vines are coming alive and raping a woman and, in context, I didn't think enough about it to tell you the truth. I guess maybe it seems too realistic, as unrealistic as vines coming alive and raping a woman is. I thought it would be looked at as just another fantasy dealing with one of the fears of everyone has of women being raped. Maybe it sinks down into the unreal—some people don't like it. Do you think there are limits that you wouldn't go beyond?

S.R.: "That I wouldn't go beyond?" I don't really set up a code for myself but if I don't like something then it doesn't go in the film—I don't write it in the first place. Or in the case of the script that I'm writing, I just read something the other night and it's too much, I don't want to shoot that.

Your chainsaw scene is really amusing, after all that, he doesn't go through with it. He pulls back the curtain and there's this chainsaw all beautifully lit.

S.R.: Yes. Everyone knows what that means.

R.T.: That little room is an homage to Tobe Hooper. If you're going to use a chainsaw you've got to take it out of the category of stealing and put it into the category of paying homage.

Is your next picture going to have those sort of things in it?

S.R.: You mean clichés?

No, no! I mean homages! There's a difference. It's seeing The Hills Have Eyes poster in it and it's seeing the chainsaw and that room. Or is that something you get out first time 'round, then the next time 'around its totally you, there's no tips of the hat.

S.R.: In the script they aren't planned, but I don't know...



R.T.: I think there are tips of the hat but they may be to things that are much less obvious. Again I think you could say perhaps there's nothing totally new, but a lot of things reworked in it. The Stooges reworked in a different way.

S.R.: Yeah, that's true. I don't think there'll be specific film makers, though this time, probably isn't that good. That's where I'm satisfying myself, and the fans probably, more than anyone. For people who don't know *The Hills Have Eyes* I guess they still see the poster and think, "Well, maybe that's a little out of place." It may draw them out of it. Otherwise, I have no objections, or I don't have any plans really except that the Three Stooges were a great influence on this film.

The Three Stooges?

S.R.: Yes. Are you familiar with them?
Oh yeah! That's interesting. I didn't see the connection at all. Give me some examples.

S.R.: Well, when the light bulb fills up with blood and the blood comes out of the sockets and there's a Stooges episode, *A Plumbing We Will Go...* Yes. I saw that about a month ago.

S.R.: You did? And they hook up all the pipes and it fills up the light bulb with water and they hook up the water supply to the electrical system. The gas ring pours water out of the television pours water; so I just took that idea entirely and changed it to horror, they're so close anyway. The Stooges are so violent. The Stooges are really horrific stuff. I can see it now. Like when he's hitting the girl with the huge block of wood. I mean that's ridiculous!

S.R.: So there's going to be things that are very *Stooguesque*; Only brought into a mystery and changed so that they work for the mystery. That's a weird idea! That's a weird idea of mixing the Stooges and horror...

S.R.: In fact we only used to make comedies and we'd have scenes that were almost as horrible as in *Evil Dead*—decapitations, and so on. But they were funny in the way they were presented. Hitch-hikers on the road during a chase scene, the car goes by and they just have a stump, there's nothing there and they feel look around and then on the windscreen you see a hand.

Don't you think that you're going to get categorised by the Evil Dead, Are you sure that you're going to be able to get your next script off the ground? Aren't they going to get back at you and say you've got to give them another Evil Dead?

S.R.: Well, since we came up with the financing for this one, we did it all ourselves, no one really has that hold over us, so I don't think that's a problem.
R.T.: From an investor's point of view there's a lot of elements of suspense and elements of horror. And as far as the audience is concerned as long as the next picture entertains them they won't question that fact that it's not *Evil Dead 2* or another horror film.

S.R.: To tell you the truth if it was another horror film I wouldn't mind being tied to it. As long as they're not disappointed when a film comes out and it's not horror, then it's O.K.

What happens if Evil Dead is a big hit and you get a phone call from Universal saying come over here?

S.R.: You mean to do the next one?
Yeah, like suddenly here's fifteen million dollars. Like the classic case of Carpenter and The Thing. Would you go for that?

S.R.: O.K. You mean would we go to the studios if they were financing? In that case it would come down to a question of control. I guess if the terms were acceptable it would be wonderful, because Robert and myself don't like the risk of doctors and lawyers who have become good friends and have a tremendous amount of faith in us, we don't like the burden of having to make back their money. We have to be responsible to them; however if a studio makes money, they don't care. They do care, but it's not as if somebody doesn't eat that night. We would like very much to get a contract...

R.T.: Or a distribution deal. I wouldn't want to go through the nightmare we went through on the distribution of *Evil Dead*. We were begging people literally, "Will you look at our picture, please!" Luging prints all over the suburbs...

S.R.: Oh that's a nightmare in New York! In and out of places, three screenings a day.

So you're not going to base yourself in Detroit?

S.R.: We've been asked that question before, and we

said then that we weren't sure.

R.T.: Certainly we have to go out of Detroit to get great production people for some areas. Detroit has wonderful gaffers grips, probably among the best because they're so fast and used to doing thirty or forty set-ups a day. When it gets into scenic design people there aren't that many so you'd have to go outside the city for that. And for post-production sound work you have to go to either New York or Los Angeles.

Is it likely that you two are going to stay together as producer and director?

R.T.: We have one other partner, Bruce Campbell, who's the actor and the associate producer.

Is he still in Detroit polishing hub caps?

R.T.: Worse than that he's trying to balance all the receipts!

But is it viable that you can all stick together much as you want to?

S.R.: For instance I wrote the screen play for *Relentless* and where are we going to try and find the money? If the studio wants to give it to us and they want their own producer, well that's unacceptable.

R.T.: They'd put an overseer in and move me down to an associate or secondary liner or P.M. (production manager) or some other thing, and I think, ideally, we'd like to work all three of us on the same picture with Bruce as an actor, Sam the director and me as producer, writer and line producer.

So Bruce was the only one who wanted to be in it?

S.R.: No! We always want to be in them!

R.T.: We sometimes have little tiny parts, in fact a bunch of little tiny parts, when some of the actors had gone we'd use my hands, my legs, my feet. Sam and I are the hitch-hikers on the road.

How much of the final product is Sam and how much is the three of you?

S.R.: The whole thing is the three of us.

How much of the movie did you storyboard before you shot?

S.R.: The last twenty minutes, we put different things in one or two shots so I storyboarded about half of it, I think.

R.T.: I thought there were storyboards for just about everything. I certainly have a nice collection I got for my birthday.

S.R.: Yeah, that was the cheapest present I ever gave!

Do you do your own storyboards?

R.T.: Oh, the world's worst drawings! You or Sam?

R.T.: Sam does them.

S.R.: All the action sequences are storyboarded. *You've mentioned your professor, have you studied film?*

S.R.: I studied with Robert. We met at Michigan State University, in a Shakespeare course—it was great. I took one Cinema Production course to see what it was like, this was the year I left school to make *Evil Dead*. *Cinema 7* it was called. It was fine because I made a film during the course but I didn't really study film, it was just one class. I did study film appreciation, about a third of my studies was that and the other two thirds was English literature and one or two history courses.

But are you a movie fan, other than a Stooges fan?

S.R.: Yes.

What's your favourite five movies?

S.R.: I'm glad you said five. They're always changing, so I'll give you today's update... *Jaws*, *Taxi Driver*, *Witness for the Prosecution*.

R.T.: Yeah, I liked it. I really liked *West Side Story* too, I just had such a blast seeing it. *Splendor in the Grass*, I really liked. I like a wide variety, *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* is a good one, that's one of Sam's favourites.

S.R.: Yeah... *Taxi Driver* also.

R.T.: You know you always want to include movies that have come up this summer like *Rocky 3*—I really enjoyed, *Pottergeist* even though a lot of people had a lot of complaints about it, I thought it was a blast. *E.T.* I really liked.

S.R.: Yeah, that's a great picture.

R.T.: You don't want to say things that just come out this summer but they may be some of my favourites.

1. (-) **E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL**/director Steven Spielberg/1982. The winnah... and neeeew chempeesen... What can one say? Steve has conquered George's six-month grip on the title in just six months; 31 weeks, if you want to be finicky. \$194,081,000



FANTASY F

2. (1) **STAR WARS**/George Lucas/1977. Another re-issue, another 8.3m dollars (a million down on '81), was good but not good enough... except to keep Luke, Treepio and Chewie & John Williams march ed of Darth Vader. \$193,500,000
3. (2) **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**/Irvin Kershner/1980. A useful re-issue (5.7m; tons lower than *Raiders*) made it 57th movie of the year, 14 notches behind *Star Wars*, re-run. Now the Jedi are coming \$140,000,000
4. (3) **JAWS**/Steven Spielberg/1975. Highest "old" movie in the chart. No re-runs, so same figures as last time. About time we saw it anew, instead, we're due for *Jaws 3-D*. \$133,435,000
5. (4) **RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK**/Steven Spielberg/1981. Top re-issue of '82 - 21.5m wins 13th spot for the year, tumbling *Grease* to give the mighty St. Steve three movies in the top five. Incredible! \$112,000,000



REST OF OUR TOP TEN and their places in history.

6. (5) **THE EXORCIST**/William Friedkin/1978/7th now in history after *Raiders* up-ended *Grease*. \$88,600,000
7. (6) **SUPERMAN** (I)/Richard Donner/1978/8th, just after *The Godfather*. \$82,700,000
8. (7) **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND**/Steven Spielberg/1977/now Steve's fourth in history's top dozen box-office winners; at No 12, after *Sound of Music* and his CE3X petron's *Sing*. \$77,600,000
9. (8) **SUPERMAN II**/Richard Lester/1981/slipping two slots to 17th, behind *Gone With The Wind*, *Saturday Night Fever*, *Animal House*, 9 to 5 - and only \$50,000 above *Rocky III*. So, Sly Stallone in *Supie IV*? \$64,500,000
10. (9) **STAR TREK** (I)/Robert Wise/1979/25th now in the annals after *Rocky III*, *On Golden Pond*, *Kramer vs Kramer*, *Smokey & The Bandit* (I), *Cuckoo's Nest*, *Sir Crazy* and George's little *American Graffiti*... and just 16m ahead of *Trek II*. \$56,000,000

mill' platform.

Star Trek II did almost as well as *I*. *Amityville II* could only hit a sixth of the original; the *III-D* notion will probably improve its potential. But like who needs another *Amityville* and from Dino, of all people?

As to the other five raves of the last year, *Tron* is still five million shy of its budget, although beating *Blade Runner*, some 13 million away, from recovering its budget. (The Ladd Company only has itself to blame for messing around with the cutting. Apparently, they're putting much of the cuts back for the video release. That's shutting the editing suite door after the course has halted.) *Mad Max II* easily tripled *F's* showing but did better still outside the United States; it was, No 11 in Britain's Top 20. *Roger Corman* ruining *Blattruck* with a terrible new title, remains, as average, locked in the four million bracket with six entries over four years (no wonder he's thinking of selling up).

Last year's new charting system seemed to work well, with less reliance on the boring money (how else does *America* chart anything? The French, *par nature*, don't do it by counting bottoms... on seats, that is); so I've retained the re-stylisation. The money's still there, but among all the other pen. I should, perhaps, point out again, that the figures - based, as annually on the listings in the showbiz bible, *Variety* - are not box-office takes, *per se*. You'll recall me reporting, perhaps, that *E.T.* had been the first film to take \$300,000,000 at the North American box-office inside six months - yet the *E.T.* chart-figure is a mere (\$117 million. That's because *Variety* gauges their charts on "film rentals"; the percentage of the ticket money actually due to the distribution combines. All figures are in film-folly - dollars.

If you're a real chauvinist, half them (depending on Mrs Thatcher's £) for a sterling total. Simply double the dollars,

When *E.T.* phones home now, he simply dials No. 1.

But - surprise, surprise. The time had come. The accounts were done. The truth was out. *E.T.*, although earning more than any other film in six months, had not managed to topple *Star Wars* as the top film in box-office history, after all. Not in 1982, that is. He came close, mind you. Damned close. Just six-and-a-half-million bucks in it, come the '82 tally. (That's about the same as Steven Spielberg's cut from six weeks' business. "So, it won't... it can't be long before Steve does it," Gary Kurtz told me the week the new *Variety* listings were published.

He was right, of course.

One week later, and *E.T.* was home... The film had vaulted ahead of Luke, Han, Chewie and the rest of the skywalking folk and robots.

There is no doubt about it anymore. *E.T.* is, officially, the No. 1 box-office champion of all time... and it's far from finished yet. I mean, the film is still playing in upwards of 500 American cinemas, let alone shattering every record in sight around the free world. The final take will be stratospheric. What do I mean: final? *E.T.* is doubtless due to be re-issued (if it ever stops its first run) from now until the apocalyptic, that's for sure. George Lucas may never see No. 1 again.

And all because of Steve's "little picture". (During shooting, he later changed that description. "This film is going to be a little... epic," he said. How right he was). He's re-writing the film history books - in particular, taking a smidgen over six months, 31 weeks to be precise, to beat George's *Star Wars* figures, which, of course, were amassed over a period of... six years.

Let me try and put that into figures for you. In 31 weeks, Steve's movie had earned Universal \$194,081,000 in "rentals", the company's share of the box-office money. The last time, Steve hit the all-time No 1 spot with *Jaws*, his similar six month total of 1975 rentals amounted to what can only be described as a mere \$102,500,000. When George pushed him down in 1977, the *Star Wars* rentals, also earned in a six

month period, were what most Hollywoodians felt to be insurmountable figures of exactly \$127 million.

In fact, it wasn't so long ago - just ten years, in fact - that the No 1 film of 1972 could also elbow aside *Gone With The Wind* and *The Sound of Music* as history's top money-earners and become the all-time champion with rentals as high as \$88,500,000. That was *C... a's The Godfather*, that was *E.T.* pushed in double that... and then some. Inflation and increased ticket prices, naturally, have a lot to do with it. More important, so does the fact that most *E.T.* fans have paid to see the movie twice, thrice... or more. Whatever the reasons - and at base, it's quite simply that *E.T.* is such a helluva satisfying movie - what Spielberg has done with it is nothing short of cinematic miracle.

He has, of course, ruined George Lucas' unequalled record of having produced the top two films in history; instead of being 1 and 2, Lucas is now 2 and 3 (and 5). Steve, himself, has directed three of the top five films in history; four of our top ten. And he has handed his mate, John Williams, the devastating record of having scored all top five films in cinematic annals - seven of our top ten!

With the sort of incredible business generated by *E.T.* since June, there's scant room for any other surprises in the new '82 chart. From the word go, basking in its Cannes glory, *E.T.* simply pulled in three times as many ticket-buyers as its closest rival, *Rocky III*, and everything else went by the board - even in America's richest movie year, France's too, by the way, while it was the worst on record in video-happy Britain.

In the sequel area, *III's* were better than *II's*. None as gigantic as the last Italian Stallion tale (e likely story, *Sh!t*!) but *Friday The 13th Part 3* almost doubled *II's* business - it's certainly the most triumphant 3-D movie thus far in the boom, or boomlet. *Halloween III* wiped the floor with *II*, while as director only, poor John Carpenter is five years behind his best takes. He's sort of stuck in the 10 million dollar apic, just as *De Palma* sticks to the 15-million slot and the poorer Wes Craven can't seem to move above the more lowly under-three

LM CHART

Compiled by TONY CRAWLEY

REST OF OUR TOP TWENTY

11. (10) **JAWS II**/Jeannot Szwarc/1978/55.6m/to be bitten by Jaws 3-D?
12. (11) **THE TOWERING INFERNO**/John Guillermin/1975/burns bright at 50m.
13. (12) **AIRPORT**/George Seaton/1970/46.5m/flying high above sequels.
14. (15) **ALIEN**/Ridley Scott/1979/45m/re-issues pushing it up.
15. (13) **POSEIDON ADVENTURE**/Ronald Neame/1972/42m/unsinkable.
16. (14) **AIRPLANE!**/Jim Abrahams, David & Jerry Zucker/1980/40.6m/sequel won't scratch it.
17. (-) **STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN**/Nicholas Meyer/1982/40m/wunnerful in its wrath.
18. (16) **YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN**/Mel Brooks/1975/38.8m/Gene's Wilder than Mel.
19. (17) **KING KONG**/John Guillermin/1976/36.9m/and look at Jessica today!
20. (18) **EARTHQUAKE**/Mark Robson/1974/36.2m/it was that kind year.

IF YOU'RE READY: ON TO THE TOP 50

21. (-) **POLTERGEIST**/Tobe Hooper/1982/36.1m/9th in '82.
22. (19) **THE AMITYVILLE HORROR**/Stuart Rosenberg/1979/35m/next is III-O.
23. (20) **MOONRAKER**/Lewis Gilbert/1979/33.9m/still the biggest Bond, Sean.
24. (21) **THE SHINING**/Stanley Kubrick/1980/30.9m/you can fool some of the people.
25. (22) **THE OMEN**/Richard Donner/1976/28.54m/beats the sequels combined.
26. (23) **THUNDERBALL**/Terence Young/1965/28.53m/beats the sequels combined.
27. (-) **BAMBI**/animation/1942/27.8m/Disney's biggest, listed by demand.
28. (24) **SNOW WHITE**/animation/1937/27.3m/Walt's first cartoon feature.
29. (27) **FOR YOUR EYES ONLY**/John Glen/1981/26.5m/fell apart at the seams.
30. (25) **THE CHINA SYNDROME**/James Bridges/1979/26m/sf for science fact; snazzy Fonda.
31. (26) **AIRPORT 1975**/Jack Smight/1975/25.8m/after than *Airplane*.
32. (28) **THE BLACK HOLE**/Gary Nelson/1979/24.4m/where it's been ever since.
33. (29) **PDPEY**/Robert Altman/1980/24.5m/Mork plays Conan, not enough spinach.
34. (30) **THE SPY WHO LOVED ME**/Lewis Gilbert/1977/23.3m/with the wrong Jaws.
35. (31) 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY/Stanley Kubrick/1968/24.1m/end next . 2020!
36. (-) **FIREFOX**/Clint Eastwood/1982/24m/every which way but good.
37. (32) 1941/Steven Spielberg/1979/23.8m/but it cost 27.6m, you see.
38. (-) **CONAN THE BARBARIAN**/John Milius/1982/23m/not barbaric enough.
39. (33) **GOLDFINGER**/Guy Hamilton/1964/22.8m/dollars and Pussy Galore.
40. (35) **FANTASIA**/animation/1940/21.6m/earned another 2m since last chart.
41. (34) **LOVE AT FIRST BITE**/Stan O'Keefe/1979/20.6m/sheer Ham(ilton), by George!
42. (36) **DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER**/Guy Hamilton/1971/19.6m/not Seen's last, after all.
43. (37) **YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE**/Lewis Gilbert/1967/19.4m/Bondo-san in Japan.
44. (38) **HIGH ANXIETY**/Mel Brooks/1977/19.1m/half-cock Hitchcock satire.

and you've a rough idea of world business.

As to the 230 films, themselves, even after last year's heavy pruning (of Disney and Hitchcock's less important winners, etc.), a few more have gone out for reasons of space and integrating newcomers. Even so, at the rate we're going we'll be into a Top 250 next year easy. Whether each film is in its absolutely honest position is impossible to vouch for; they are close enough, I'd say. But considering inflation and what 30s, 40s, 50s etc. figures are really worth today (did *Oino's Kong* really beat *Cope's*?), I'd need to be a top City accountant to be totally on the button – and then, of course, immediately out of data on publication. Some figures, and therefore placings are different, due to re-issues, and new accounts from studios. (*Variety*, by the way, suddenly placed *The Towering Inferno* at half its old 50 million figures this year. I've left it at 50 million; it's been there since '75,

and I can't believe the accounts departments of the two studios involved could have got it that much wrong and only just come clean; more like a clinker in *Variety's* computer.

Apart from the Top 20, all new entries are in bold type, in case you want to check up on your own fave of '82. Last year's new-style positions are in brackets. Spielberg, of course, Sir Alfred Hitchcock have the most films listed (six); Carpenter, De Palma, Hitchcock, Kubrick and Oon Taylor have four each. As always, Brits are all over the place (Michael Anderson, Lewis Gilbert, John Guillermin, Guy Hamilton, Johnny Hough, J. Lee Thompson and Terence Young) and not to be forgotten is that five of that top ten were made-in-Britain.

Enough! All you ever need to know (until you tell me different in your mail) is ready and waiting. It's settle your arguments – and your bets time. Have fun while you're delving. ●

45. (39) **HALLOWEEN**/John Carpenter/1978/18.5m/and nowhere close for five years.
46. (45) **TIME BANDITS**/Terry Gilliam/1981/17.9m/beat *Tron* and *Blade Runner*!
47. (47) **CLASH OF THE TITANS**/Desmond Davis/1981/17.1m.
48. (40) **FRIDAY THE 13TH** (I)/Sean Cunningham/1980/17.1m/no possible comment.
49. (44) **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE**/Stanley Kubrick/1971/17m/re-issue, please!
50. (41) **EXCALIBUR**/John Boorman/1981/17m/survived porno's *Sexcalibur*.

FEEL STRONG ENOUGH FOR... THE TOP 100?

51. (-) **PETER PAN**/animation/1953/16.8m/re-charted as he's the first E.T.
52. (-) **FRIDAY THE 13TH – PART III** (O)/Steve Miner/1982/16.5m/leave it alone now.
53. (42) **AIRPORT '77**/Jerry Jameson/1977/16.2m/Lemmon squirts high.
54. (-) **PETE'S DRAGON**/Don Chaffey/1977/16.1m/same year as *CE3K* and it's called Elliott.
54. (43) **FLASH GORRUM**/Mike Hodges/1980/16.1m/but if Nic Roeg hadn't quit.
56. (46) **LIVE AND LET DIE**/Guy Hamilton/1973/15.8m/Old Moore Almenack debut.
57. (-) **TRON**/Stephen Lisberger/1982/15.2m.
58. (48) **PLANET OF THE APES**/Franklin J. Schaffner/1968/15m/in the beginning.
58. (48) **ROSEMARY'S BABY**/Roman Polanski/1968/15m/made William king of the Castle.
58. (48) **CARRIE**/Brian De Palma/1976/15m.
58. (48) **DRESSED TO KILL**/Brian De Palma/1980/15m.
62. (52) **COMA**/Michael Crichton/1978/14.6m/full-bodied work.



63. (-) **BLADE RUNNER**/Ridley Scott/1982/14.5m/unkindest cut of all.
64. (64) **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON**/John Landis/1981/14m-howwwwll!
65. (53) **EXORCIST II: THE HERETIC**/John Boorman/1977/13.9m/balderdash.
65. (54) **LORD OF THE RINGS**/Ralph Bakshi/1978/13.7m/so he's quit animation.
66. (55) **DMEN II: DAMIEN**/Don Taylor/1978/13.6m/an ominous drop.
66. (55) **ALTERED STATES**/Ken Russell/1980/12.5m/or why William Hurts.
69. (56) **CHARIOTS OF THE GODS**/Harold Raini/1973/12.4m/swing low, sweet.
70. (57) **ORACULA**/John Badham/1979/Christopher Lee was most vivid.
71. (59) **THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW**/Jim Sherman/1975/12.2m/Stallone in a ra-make...?
71. (-) **QUEST FOR FIRE**/Jean-Jacques Annaud/1982/12.2m/gem of the year.
73. (60) **THE FURY**/Brian De Palma/1978/12.1m.
73. (60) **HALLOWEEN II**/Rick Rosenthal/1981/12m/buried his boss' *Thing*.
75. (61) **BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY**/Daniel Haller/1979/12.0m/tv lives?
75. (63) **THE ELEPHANT MAN**/David Lynch/1980/12.0m/fantastic, but true.
77. (62) **CAPRICORN ONE**/Peter Hyams/1978/12m/Lord Lee makes the Grade.
78. (-) **BEYOND AND BACK**/James L. Conway/1978/11.7m/there is life after death.
79. (89) **THE FINAL CONFLICT**/Graham Baker/1981/11.5m/Damien's farewell.
79. (-) **GHOST STORY**/John Irvin/1981/11.5m/e new genre ster... in Fred Astaire!
81. (65) **WHEN A STRANGER CALLS**/Fred Walton/1979/11.4m... hang up!
82. (68) 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA/Richard Fleischer/1954/11.26m/Jaws' mum.
83. (66) **PSYCHO**/Alfred Hitchcock/1960/11.2m/like who needs *Psycho II*?
84. (67) **INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS**/Philip Kaufman/1978/11.1m/pod off!
85. (69) **THE FOG**/John Carpenter/1980/11m/John's been in one ever since.
85. (-) **THE SWORD AND THE SORCERER**/Albert Pyun/1982/11m/beat *Mad Max II*!
87. (70) **MYSTERIOUS MONSTERS**/R. Guenette/1975/10.9m/has to be a joker in every pack.
88. (71) **THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE**/Richard Fradenberg/1978/10.8m/... or two.
89. (72) **ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK**/John Carpenter/1981/10.5m/Kurt's not Clint.
89. (-) **MAD MAX II**/George Miller/1982/10.5m/cos USA called it *Road Warrior*.
89. (-) **THE THING**/John Carpenter/1982/10.5m.
92. (74) **PROPHECY**/John Frankenheimer/1979/10.49m/looked more like 1949.
93. (76) **MONY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN**/Terry Jones/1979/10.4m/unimpeachable.

94. (87) **HEAVY METAL**/Gerald Potterton/1981/10.3m/nice try, guys.
 95. (75) **ROLLERCOASTER**/James Goldstone/1977/10.1m/helluva bad ride.
 96. (-) **THE DARK CRYSTAL**/Jim Henson, Frank Oz/1982/10m... but in one month only!
 96. (84) **OUTLAND**/Peter Hyams/1981/10m... in over a year, whoops.
 98. (79) **FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE**/Terence Young/1964/9.8m/women's top Bond.
 99. (83) **THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WOMAN**/John Schumacher/1981/9.6m/small fry.
 100. (81) **ESCAPE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN**/Joel Hough/1975/9.5m/Disney tries to grow up.
 100. (81) **LOGAN'S RUN**/Michael Anderson/1976/9.5m/miserable, until the version.
 100. (77) **FRIDAY THE 13TH PART 2**/Steve Miner/1981/9.5m/exceedingly minor.

AND SO, ON INTO THE NEXT CENTURY: THE TOP 200.

103. (85) **ORCA**/Michael Anderson/1979/9.3m/Bo Derek's in there, someplace.
 104. (86) **THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN**/Guy Hamilton/1974/9.4m/Chris Lee finally hits the chart.
 105. (88) **WILLARDO**/Delbert Mann/1971/9.3m/like that, you dirty rat!
 106. (90) **ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE**/Peter Hunt/1969/9.1m/George who?
 107. (91) **ROLLERBALL**/Norman Jewison/1975/9.5m/Jimmy Caan's win 'em all.



108. (-) **CREEPSHOW**/George Romero/1982/9m/Romero's first chart entry.
 109. (92) **AIRPORT '80 - THE CONCORDE**/David Lowell Rich/1979/8.9m/big no/life.
 110. (93) **THE LATE GREAT PLANET EARTH**/Robert Aram/1977/8.8m/forget it!
 111. (96) **THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN**/Robert Wise/1971/8.6m/strain is right.
 111. (94) **BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES**/Ted Post/1970/8.6m/the second one.
 113. (95) **THE CAT FROM OUTER SPACE**/Norman Tokar/1978/8.4m/right idea - wrong creature.
 114. (97) **DARBY O'GILL AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE**/Robert Stevenson/1959/8.3m/g-mazing!
 115. (98) **THE HOWLING**/Joe Dante/1981/8.2m/great Bottin effects, but Baker's won for Landis.
 116. (99) **SLEEPER**/Woody Allen/1978/8.5m/Woody before turning wooden.
 117. (102) **SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER**/Sam Wenmacker/1977/7.9m/Singood to me...
 118. (101) **SILENT SCREAM**/Denny Harris/1979/7.9m/Enter, at last, Barbara Steele.
 119. (104) **THE SWARM**/Irvin Allen/1978/7.7m/decidedly impeachable.
 120. (105) **FAMILY PLOT**/Alfred Hitchcock/1976/7.5m/Last from The Master.
 121. (106) **GRIZZLY**/William C. Girdler/1976/7.5m/Jaws with paws.
 121. (107) **RETURN FROM WITCH MOUNTAIN**/Joel Hough/1978/7.3m/Chris Lee meets Baby Jane...
 123. (108) **BEYOND THE OOD**/Oliver Hallman/1975/7.1m/oh just hell man.
 123. (108) **IT'S ALIVE**/Larry Cohen/1977/7.1m/then again, not lively enough.
 126. (-) **HALLOWEEN III: SEASON OF THE WITCH**/Tommy Wellee/1982/7m/not all C's productions work.
 126. (111) **WESTWORLD**/Michael Crichton/1973/7m/Yul Brynner as C-3P0.
 128. (116) **FRENZY**/Alfred Hitchcock/1976/6.9m/his last made in Britain.
 129. (112) **RAISE THE TITANIC**/Jerry Jameson/1980/6.8m/sixth of its budget, so Lord Lew sank.
 129. (122) **DRAGONS LAYER**/Matthew Robbins/1981/6.8m/Very disappointing.
 131. (113) **THE FINAL COUNTDOWN**/Don Taylor/1980/6.6m/gives our genre a bad name.
 132. (114) **SWORD IN THE STONE**/Wolf Reitherman/1963/6.56/Disney's *Excalibur*.
 133. (153) **HOUSE OF WAX**/Andre de Toth/1953/6.55m/two mill' up due to 3-D re-runs.
 134. (120) **TIME AFTER TIME**/Nicholas Meyer/1979/6.5m/every real mini-classic.
 140. (-) **VISITING FOURS**/Jean-Claude Lord/1976/6.5m/carry on worse...
 136. (117) **NORTH BY NORTHWEST**/Alfred Hitchcock/1959/6.4m/e giant classic.
 137. (118) **OR NO**/Terence Young/1962/6.35m/from little eorns, Bondanzas grow.
 138. (121) **HIGH AND THE MIGHTY**/William Wellman/1954/6.1m/Airport's daddy.
 138. (122) **METEOR**/Ronald Neame/1979/6m/no wonder Sean needs Bond.
 140. (124) **PHANTASM**/Don Coscarelli/1979/6m/Did he understand it?
 140. (122) **PROM NIGHT**/Paul Lynch/1980/6m/mini-league slash 'n' deshers.
 140. (122) **SCANNERS**/Edward Cronenberg/1981/6m/just wait for *Videodrome*.
 140. (-) **AMITYVILLE II**/Omarino Oemiani/1982/6m/never rent a house from Oino Oe-Oum-Oum.
 145. (129) **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS** (SPECIAL EDITION)/Steven

- Spielberg/1980/5.85m/bit of a con; but add to original and it'd beat *Superman* into 7th slot.
 146. (127) **RACE WITH THE DEVIL**/Jack Starrett/1975/5.8m/Peter Fonda's Satanist rider.
 147. (128) **HANGAR 18**/James L. Conway/1980/5.7m/UFOs - the bad way.
 148. (130) **REAR WINDOW**/Alfred Hitchcock/1954/5.7m/perfect - overdue for a re-run.
 149. (131) **ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES**/Don Taylor/1971/5.56m/the third one.
 150. (-) **THE INCUBUS**/John Hough/1982/5.506m/59th film of '82 though they claim 8th.
 151. (132) **FANTASTIC VOYAGE**/Richard Fleischer/1966/5.5m/end yep, it was.
 151. (132) **BARBARELLA**/Roger Vadim/1968/5.5m/La Fonda before budding work-out.
 151. (-) **HERO AT LARGE**/Martin Davidson/1980/5.5m/playing at Capt Avenger.
 151. (-) **CAT PEOPLE**/Paul Schrader/1982/5.5m/playing at sex, for pseudo only.
 155. (139) **THE BIRDS**/Alfred Hitchcock/1963/5.3m/effects on the wing.
 156. (134) **FLESH GOROOD**/Howard Ziehm/1974/5.3m/more nudie than Vadim.
 156. (134) **THE CHANGELING**/Peter Medek/1980/5.3m/Great Scott, by George!
 158. (-) **THE LEGACY**/Richard Marquand/1978/5.25m/Accidentally missed
 158. (143) **DEATH RACE 2000**/Paul Bertel/1975/5.25m/good to see Paul back...
 160. (136) **MONTY PYTHON & THE HOLY GRAIL**/Ternes Gilliam & Jones/1975/5.1m/full of Cleeze-ups.
 161. (141) **GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD**/Gordon Hessler/1974/5.14m/Singood to me II.
 162. (-) **MANIAC**/William Lustig/1981/5.1m/I have no comment at this time...
 163. (-) **SOMEWHERE IN TIME**/Jeannot Szwarc/1980/5.09m/Supie breaks time barrier.
 164. (137) **DAMNATION ALLEY**/Jack Smight/1977/5.03m/Fox s'f until George arrived.
 165. (138) **KING KONG**/Merian C. Cooper/1933/5m - but in today's money, Dino?
 165. (140) **DR. STRANGELOVE OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB**/Stanley Kubrick/1964/5m/Reagan's fave movie?
 165. (142) **THE REINCARNATION OF PETER PROUD**/J. Lee Thompson/1975/5m/who ever saw it?
 165. (-) **COMING AT YA**/Fernando Baldi/1981/5m/charted for reviving 30.
 169. (144) **HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME**/J. Lee Thompson/1981/4.9m/not many happy returns.
 169. (-) **SATURN 3**/Stanley Donen/1980/4.9m/late accountancy - *Saturn 3D* next, Lew?
 171. (145) **MOBY DICK**/John Huston/1956/4.8m/ther she blows - but where, anymore?
 171. (145) **THE LEGEND OF BGDGY CREEK**/Charles B. Pierce/1972/4.8m/e reel creeker.
 173. (-) **THE SECRET OF NIMH**/Don Bluth/1982/4.79m/must try harder.
 174. (-) **SILENT RAGE**/Michael Miller/1982/4.79m/amazing karate-horror cock-up.
 175. (148) **JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH**/Henry Levin/1959/4.77m/boring!
 176. (149) **DN THE BEACH**/Stanley Kramer/1959/4.775m/... just the end of the world.
 177. (150) **FRITZ THE CAT**/Ralph Bakshi/1972/4.7m/start of the comic-strip fix?
 178. (151) **FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN**/Paul Morrissey/1974/4.7m/being 30 re-run.
 179. (-) **THE BEASTMASTER**/Don Coscarelli/1982/4.68m/Conan the Vegetarian.
 180. (152) **WIZARDS**/Ralph Bakshi/1977/4.65m/sorry Ralph - wizard, it ain't
 181. (154) **THE SENTINEL**/Michael Winner/1977/4.62m/terrible, not terror.
 182. (155) **CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES**/J. Lee Thompson/1972/4.5m/the fourth one.
 182. (156) **WOLFEN**/Michael Wiedeligh/1981/4.5m/not enough bite, for a 17m. budget.
 184. (157) **THE SPACEMAN AND KING ARTHUR**/Russ Mayberry/1979/4.47m/middling Disney.
 185. (-) **SLAUGHTERHOUSE 5**/George Roy Hill/1972/4.4m/apologies for missing it last time; a gem.
 186. (158) **MARDONED**/John Sturges/1969/4.35m/the one that become fact.
 187. (-) **NIGHTMARE**/Romano Scavolini/1981/4.3m/s/o bed, Tom Savini took his name off it.
 188. (159) **THE AWAKENING**/Mike Newell/1980/4.25m/Chuck Heston finds Mummy.
 189. (186) **GALAXIA**/William Sachs/1980/4.2m/slas, poor Gorchy Stratten...
 190. (160) **THE BAD SEE**/Mervyn LeRoy/1956/4.1m/first kid-as-killer.
 191. (161) **WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?**/Robert Aldrich/1964/4.05m/Bette Davis' eyes as *Mommie Dearest*.
 192. (162) **BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES**/J. Lee Thompson/1973/4.02m/fifth... and last?
 193. (164) **WIZARD OF OZ**/Victor Fleming/1939/4m/Gary Kurtz making a sequel.
 193. (164) **THE NUTTY PROFESSOR**/Jerry Lewis/1958/4m/Jerrykill 'n' Hyde.
 193. (164) **THE DMENGA MAN**/Boris Sagal/1971/4m/Heston's last man on earth; no sps in sight.
 193. (164) **THE STEPFORD WIVES**/Bryan Forbes/1975/4m/new wives for old.
 193. (164) **THE FOOD OF THE GODS**/Berl I. Gordon/1976/4m/great feast.
 193. (164) **FUTUREWORLD**/Richard T. Heffron/1976/4m/another neff sequel.
 193. (164) **THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU**/Don Taylor/1977/4m/ditto.
 193. (164) **THE EXTERMINATOR**/James Glickenhaus/1980/4m/torching 'em how.

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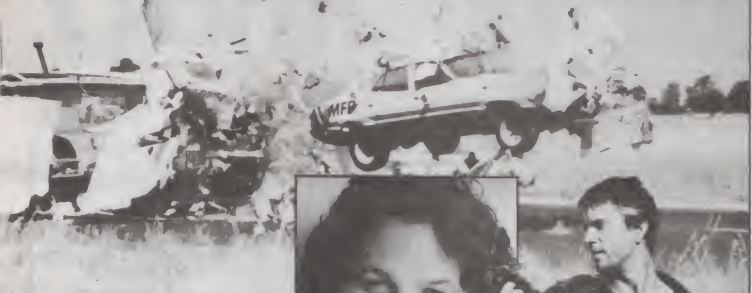
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THE AVORIAZ
TAPES '83.

GEORGE MILLER



Interview by Tony Crawley

It's becoming difficult to stage the festival du film fantastique high in Avoriaz ski-country of France without the amiable figure—and foul cigars—of George Miller being around.

He was there as a little known Australian doctor turned movie-maker in 1980 with a film the French had barely heard about called *Mad Max*. He was back again in 1981 with a film they'd definitely heard of and wanted to see called *Mad Max II*—because by then, the French still hadn't been allowed by their censors to see *Max I*.

On both occasions, George went home with an Avoriaz prize in his luggage. Plus enough publicity that forced the eventual release of *Max*, followed by *II*, and the French found themselves a new cult icon.

And so, George was back on hand at this year's 11th event with nothing to show or sell. Just plenty of work to do. He was president of the jury which gave what had almost become George's exclusive property in recent years to, what else but *The Dark Crystal*. He also got a ton more publicity, of course, resulting in *Mad Max I* being re-issued—but this time, uncut.

A good opportunity, therefore, to grab a hold of George and sort out a whole welter of rumours which have been swirling into the Starburst offices in London, not to mention my own modest little bureau outpost in Marly-le-Roi.

In good humour, as ever, the one-time doctor (medical school was his film school, as his twin brother attended all the main lectures the first year, while George spent every morning at the movies) put the record straight on just about everything. Rumour-mongers—prepare to be put out of business. For a month, at least...

Starburst: Let's start with your Hollywood debut, *Twilight Zone*... and without going into the obvious area. You were in West Germany at the time of the accident, anyway. How did the film begin for you?

George Miller: We used to get *Twilight Zone* in Australia...

Think yourself lucky. The French are only now getting *Star Trek* eighteen years after the fact!

Jeeze! We'd often quote *Twilight Zone* in

discussions about film. One of the big problems is how to do things resourcefully in films, no matter how big the budget or whatever. *Twilight Zone* is a classic example of how an almost minimalist work enhances style. I mean, the sets were just one set. That didn't impede the story-telling. They were made with great efficiency. And though the rather elliptical device of using the surreal, they were able to deal with some very complex issues.

Which ones do you mean?

Probably one of the best things I've ever seen on the Nazi atrocities was that episode where the camp commander goes back to visit the concentration camp and the ghosts of his victims try him. (*Deaths-Head Revisited*) by Rod Serling, directed by Don Medford, in the third, 1961-2 season).

Or do you know the one about the sky going dark when a negro is to be hung? (*I Am The Night—Colour Me Black* by Rod Serling, directed by Abner Biberman, in the fifth, 1963-4 season). That's pretty gutsy stuff. I mean, I don't know if people will take that on now in network television.

Not in America with the bland leading the bland.

And I remember another one—about a boxing match. The whole of the fight was just played on detailed faces and hands of the crowd. They didn't have a thousand extras. The boxers were shot up against the lights, low angles, so that they were very stylised. (Presumably *The Big, Tall Wish* by Rod Serling again, directed by Ron Winston in the first, 1959-60 season, as the *Zone*'s other mini-*Rocky* was Richard Matheson's *Steel* (director, Don Weiss, in the fifth season) which had Lee Marvin concerned with robot prizefighters). So we'd often quoted how they

did it on *Twilight Zone*... Hey, I'm sorry, this is an elaborate answer to your question.

Carry on, we're not keen on yes/no responses!

Well, I often thought: Jeeze, wouldn't it be great if there was, in fact, almost a group of film-makers who got together and made a tribute to the *Twilight Zone*. This was just a passing thought... To make something in that vein. There had been attempts, as you know, to do that sort of thing. But they'd never reached the heights of the Rod Serling programmes. And then, what happened was, I think I read somewhere they had decided to do the *Twilight Zone* film at one of the Hollywood studios. And I thought: Oh, there's a good idea.

Of course it was, you said, I had it first... No, it wasn't a question of that. It wasn't even a definite idea in my mind, if just occurred to me that it was a pity that something like that wasn't done. It would be nice to do it. It was more out of regret than, "Let's go out and do it." I was just glad that someone was doing it, you know.

So how did you manage to join the party? Kathy Kennedy, who produced *E.T.*, put a call through to Australia saying that if I came to America, could I pop in and meet. I think they'd seen *The Road Warrior*, as *Mad Max II* was called in America and... just sorta liked it. It so happened that the only time I was in Los Angeles and had time to meet was when there was a meeting going on between Steven Spielberg, John Landis, Joe Dante, Warner Brothers and Richard Matheson. So, I literally walked straight into a *Twilight Zone* meeting! Because it was the only time available.

And that was that?

Originally, there were to be three episodes for



the film. Then, about half-way through this meeting, Steven Spielberg very improbably said, "Oh, why don't you do one!" Just like that.

And the earth moved for you . . .

Well first of all, I thought they were joking. And then they started to joke and say, "Well, this is not the way we do things in Hollywood. It doesn't happen this way . . . normally." But that was it. They just made room for another episode. It was just like him putting his arm around my shoulders saying, you know, figuratively saying, "Come on and do one. . . get in and do one!" It was just a very generous invitation.

What happened from thereon? Did you have your own choice of episode—and did it have to be from the old series or could you come up with an original?

I wasn't party to the early meetings . . . I think, originally, there was an idea to do some originals. But as it stands, Landis' is an original which he wrote very much in the vein of *Twilight Zone* . . . and keeping to the spirit of *Twilight Zone*. And as it turned out, the other three are, if not direct re-makes, at least, very closely . . . In varying degrees based on episodes from the series. ►





A case of I'd love to say it's so: Did the other three of you ever talk about the same favorite old cars?

No. What happened was... Well, I wrote I did, based on *Nightmare on Elm Street* by Richard Matheson, written by R. L. Stine; then, simply Dick D'Amico, the *Star Trek* director and starring *Star Trek's* Wilford Brimley (Shatner, during the fifth season) was one they wanted to do when they were going to do only three episodes. And I'd never seen that episode. I read the short story that night. Then I saw the 1963/4 version later.

Is that a good thing, to look at the original? It doesn't bother me. I think if I was going to re-make a feature film, I'd probably feel that, maybe, I should see it. But film language has changed so much, stylistically, you don't sort of use the original... Well, you might use it as a sort of technical reference. Did they use a lot of rain? Something like that. It's the same as working from the screenplay of a film. It's just part of the information available.

What sort of time did you have to shoot? I had twelve days.

Fast. Spielberg shot his in six.

Faster! Obviously the budget is lower than for even a low-budget movie. Did that affect the casting choices?

Look, obviously the thing was, whatever the plans were... the thing became very confused after the accident. The whole thing was delayed for months and after something like that, a film, ultimately, becomes very

trivial. When it was decided some months later to continue with it, the original idea had changed. Originally, it was... Look, here's the episode, shoot it where you like—in the style you like. There wasn't even a budget... I was nominated. We knew we were working on a budget. You can't do *Twilight Zone* with thousands of extras, it's completely against the spirit of *Twilight Zone*. That's one of the great strengths in that great style it came to evolve.

How did you go about casting for the first time in Hollywood?

That was incredibly simple. You got John Lithgow, the guy from *Glee*—indeed the gal from *Garp*!

I just happened to see *The World According to Garp* and loved the film by the way; in particular, John Lithgow's performance. It just so happened he was visiting—Crested Roy Hill, I think—in the offices next to Spielberg's offices on the lot. And they said "Why don't you meet John Lithgow, make him fit into your episode." I met him and there was just no choice of anyone else. He was interested. And he was wonderful. That was the easiest thing in the world. The rest was just conventional business. Casting without even thinking of it. And no vast difference, I suppose between shooting on a Hollywood soundstage and working on location with *Max and Cauld*. *Broken Hill*?

Absolutely none. I'd heard about the guys working in-house at the studios. They're very







unionised. They watch the clock. They're on a continuity of employment, so there's a certain type involved. . . . Also I knew that the crews are very, very big and become unwieldy. So, I was a bit apprehensive about dealing with that sort of situation. I thought they'd be a little bit too blasé. . . . It was completely the opposite! First of all, the crew was a mixture of outside guys and gals inside the lot; essentially young people, very enthusiastic. I'm absolutely convinced that it doesn't matter where you shoot the picture, it's how you cast the crew. . . . the people you work with. A good crew in any country, I'm sure, is exactly the same experience.

And is your *Zone* show all cut and dried and complete?

It's cut. We're just going to do the music and sound next.

We know about your tale.

About the guy on the plane. . . .

Seeing. . . er. . . things on the wing. Yeah, we know about that. We know John Landis' is an original—we know rather too much about

poor John's episode. We know that Joe Dante's show is the Rod Sterling tale, it's *A Good Life*, first directed by Jim Sheldon in the third season of the tv series. What we don't know about is Spielberg's story.

I think that's a sort of secret.

Somehow, I thought you'd say that!

The policy on each Spielberg film is to keep it secret. And part of the attraction of *Twilight Zone* is that you never knew where you were going to go each time Rod Sterling came on. **You're hedging, George. You know what the tale is!**

But I think because it's the one episode that very few people know anything about, I think it'd be unfair to. . . .

Okay. But about the other big secret. Or problem, at least. Have they settled on some kind of host-cum-narrator for the episodes? Is Spielberg really turning into Hitchcock or do the tales dovetail into each other?

They kinda dovetail. The narrator business is still trying to be figured out. The big problem with *Twilight Zone* is that the stamp of Rod

Sterling was there. *Twilight Zone* without

Rod Sterling is not quite *Twilight Zone*.

Don't let Spielberg catch you saying that!

To me, that was the special thing about the series—Rod Sterling. There's been some

thought about, you know. . . . there's guys who can do his voice, for instance. And even of having a seance to bring Rod Sterling back! **Wasn't there some bizarre suggestion about using and/or electronically changing some old Rod Sterling intro footage?**

Yeah, that was thought of. Gee, you've certainly done your homework.

That's what we have to do, just as you have to make good films. Let's look into those films now. It's Rumour Time. . . .

(He looks blank).

Are you handling the second-unit work on *Raiders II*, with the promise of directing *Raiders III*?

No! (He looks even more blank-faced). That's the first time I've heard about any of that.

Oh, we keep hearing it, and of course, with the Spielberg connection, plus stories that





The double bill of *Mad Max* and *Mad Max II* explodes onto the screen in a welter of flying bodies and screaming metal. The opening scene of *Mad Max* is certainly up to the standard of anything seen in the sequel movie. The lunatic ravings of The Nightrider (Vince Gill), drunk on speed. The ace with which he eludes each successive pursuer. The careful camera framing which gradually shows the audience a little more of the mysterious officer called Max (Mel Gibson). A hurtling car smashing a path through a caravan. All this and more in the first five minutes or so of the film.

Unfortunately, that level of excitement is not maintained for the remaining 80 minutes. Rather than spectacular action, the movie climaxes with a series of brutal and cold-blooded killings as Max tracks down each member of the motorcycle gang responsible for the deaths of his wife Jessie (Joanne Samuel) and their child The Sprog (Brenden Heath).

The first *Mad Max* was shot on a shoe-string by ex-doctor turned director George Miller (see interview on preceding pages) and producer Byron Kennedy. And it looks as though most of the money went into the opening sequence. Nevertheless, *Mad Max* is a diverting revenge story, set about five or ten years in the future, presumably after some kind of World Nuclear War, where civil law has broken down and only a few police officers

must try to keep order in the face of a non-caring population. Of the two films, *Mad Max* has the more disturbing atmosphere. The idea of a corrupt Government is slightly more sinister than no Government at all.

Mad Max II, on the other hand, contains several rays of hope. The fact that, even after a Nuclear Holocaust, some people look to the future is somehow comforting. That Max allies himself with such a group allows the audience to see that Max has not purged himself of all human feeling. Besides, the action sequences are more exciting.

Mad Max II is a better constructed effort than its predecessor. It has a beginning, a middle and an end and its climaxes increase in impact until the devastating "battle of the tanker" which all but fills the last fifteen minutes of the movie. The characters are better etched, possessing more humour and depth than those in the first film. It will take a better picture than *Battletruck* to tarnish *Mad Max II*'s reputation as the best of the action road movies.

Mad Max I and *II* are well worth the visit, if only to marvel at the improvement in George Miller's craft. His *Twilight Zone* segment should give the more experienced directors a run for their money.

The double bill opens in London on March 17th and a few weeks later in the provinces.



there'll be lotsa motor-bike stuff in *Raiders II*, it seems to make sense... carry weight. But it's not correct?

No.
Would this be due to the other rumour—that you're now preparing *Mad Max III*?

No!
Oh! I hear your partner Byron Kennedy was in London searching for a writer or something... Is he doing it alone then?

Well, we'd be connected together.
So is it a definite project this year, next year, now or never?

No. No! Gee, I don't know where you hear your rumours.
Oh from all over. Soon as we get a chance to check with the people involved, we check.

Well, it's no. It hasn't even been broached, this *Raiders II* thing.

So what IS next, then?
Writing.
Movies or books?
Writing scripts. Sitting down and writing with Terry Hayes, who I've written two

screenplays with. *Mad Max II* and *Roxanne*. Writing for *Australia* or *Hollywood*?

One of the three projects is in Australia, one in-between and one in America. It's impossible to predict what happens in the film industry, but one thing I know is I wouldn't like just to work in America or just to work in Australia. Both have different things to recommend and both have disadvantages. So far, I don't know which of the three screenplays we've been working on will emerge as the next film to do.

What is *Roxanne*?
That's the first screenplay we wrote. We both developed a very strong working relationship on that and when we were just about to do it, the combination of several forces led us to doing *Mad Max II*, instead. One reason being it was much easier to raise the finance in Australia because of the recently introduced tax legislation. So we did that. First, we weren't going to do a *Mad Max II*. When we did decide on that, that suddenly got in the way of *Roxanne*. Now, even though we love

the screenplay, we're not too sure if we're ever going to do it.

Does it come under the general or loose heading of fantasy...?

Roxanne is a kind of Bette Davis-Joan Crawford melodrama between two teenage girls. Very stylised. The problem with it is that the budget is too big for it... as a piece of style. Budgets in America and Australia were becoming so high, it becomes a picture you have to buy insurance for. The tendency would be to cast for safety, be less radical in style, cast names and all that. So the thing became too unwieldy to do.

Of the three screenplays which you don't seem to want to name just yet—I have to ask again—is *Mad Max III* one of them?

No.
Rumourmongers-go home!



If I ever rang up the illustrious editor of this journal, Alan McKenzie and said to him, "Alan, in the time that you've known me, have you watched with delight as the wall around me has fallen away to reveal a warm, sensitive human being who has tenderly preserved the soul and spirit of a child?" he would no doubt say, "Been on the bottle again, Brosnan?"

And I wouldn't blame him, but that's how the publisher of *Starlog* sees his resident columnist David Gerrold. He described him in those exact words in a recent editorial and, good grief, he obviously *means* it. It's no joke, he's being serious in a way that only an American can...

Americans, as I've said before, are funny people. We may share the same language but in all sorts of other ways we're not on the same wave-length, as that above quote demonstrates. I mean, here you have this intense relationship between the publisher, Kerry O'Quinn and Gerrold with the former announcing to the world (or at least the readers of *Starlog*) what "joy" he feels at witnessing Gerrold's transformation from being a sour and somewhat cynical columnist to the up-beat, *positive* character he is today. O'Quinn gives the impression that this transformation is on a par with Helen Keller's salvation at the hands of Anne Sullivan (*The Miracle Worker*) with O'Quinn himself in the Sullivan role - "Over the years I continued to argue with David frequently, and out of the whole grizzly process has grown a mutual respect and closeness I never dreamed could

be."

You'd think from that sort of waffle that O'Quinn was discussing something *important*, not the American equivalent of *It's Only a Movie*. You could say, and probably will, that Gerrold's column is far superior to mine and he's a far better writer (I disagree, of course) but basically he's doing what I am - trying to write entertaining trivia.

No don't get me wrong - I'm not knocking trivia (my whole life is a monument to trivia) nor am I knocking my columns. I work hard on them and write them to the best of my ability, no matter what you might think, but I certainly don't regard them as competition for the Sermon on the Mount. Gerrold, on the other hand, *does* seem to be writing down from a great height. For example, here is an excerpt from his column, in the same issue as the above-quoted editorial, in which he is explaining to readers the correct way to write a letter to "a writer or an actor or any other celebrity" (in other words, to Mr Gerrold): "Be polite. Remember, you are writing to another human being on the planet Earth. That's a very special position - there are only four-and-a-half billion of us..."

Only an American could write something like that with a straight face. I could imagine the reaction I'd get if I tried to lecture you lot on the right way to write to me: "First of all, you must be gentle with me. We celebrity writers are very sensitive souls and are easily bruised emotionally. Think of how bad you'd feel if you hurt me with an unkind word..."

Gerrold doesn't know how lucky he is over

there. He should try reading some of my mail for a change. Like this letter, written in red ink (traditionally all the crankiest of mail is written in red): "Brosnan (the thing), My friend and I are both friends of Yoda (not like you). We want you in a pill so we can flush you down the loo... We think Yoda's wise talk is very good even if you don't. And there are other things too, firstly Yoda is better looking than you (then again even a Wookiee is better looking than you) and secondly he doesn't turn his nose up at every film that comes his way... Lots of spit on your jacket - Yoda's Best Fans."

I bet Gerrold never gets letters like that. If he did he'd soon be rebuilding the wall around his tenderly preserved soul and spirit of a child. Me, I can take it. I'm made of tougher material, though I must admit that the jibe about Yoda being better looking than me did bring a tear to my eye (*but they're right*, a friend told me helpfully when I showed her the letter). And how do they *know* Yoda doesn't turn up his nose at every film that comes along? I didn't even know he wrote film reviews.

No, Gerrold and the rest of that *Starlog* mob have it easy over there. And they can keep it. Do you think I *mind* that my editor has never told me I'm a warm, sensitive human being? Do you think I *mind* he's never said in print I have the tenderly preserved soul and spirit of a child? No, of course not...

On second thoughts, why hasn't he? What's wrong with me? What's Gerrold got that I haven't? ●

Pride of place this month goes to a book which was first published a decade ago but has not been available in paperback for several years. The reissue of *The Fifth Head of Cerberus* by Gene Wolfe (Arrow, £1.50) was no doubt prompted by the success of the author's more recent *The Book of the New Sun* cycle, and it's long overdue. Wolfe has received considerable praise for his current series-in-progress, but to my mind *The Fifth Head of Cerberus* is his finest achievement to date. I've read it three times now, and with each reading it seems just as fresh, haunting and wonderfully mysterious.

The book's background is a twin-planet system colonized by settlers of French origin. It's not a novel in the accepted sense of the word but three closely linked novellas which explore the enigma of the native race of shape-changers on the planet Saint Anne.

Have the shape-changers been exterminated

by the humans? Did they ever exist at all? Do they perhaps still survive, having taken on human form to live amongst the colonists? Wolfe explores these possibilities with consummate artistry. Such familiar sf motifs as robots, clones and mind-expanding drugs are used in the stories, but these are never allowed to clutter up what is essentially a very human tale about the search for identity. At the centre of it is the intriguing figure of John V. Marsch, who seems to be an anthropologist devoted to proving the existence of the shape-changers. But the author ultimately leaves us with the tantalizing possibility that Marsch himself might be a shape-changer.

Any synopsis of a book of this quality will fail to do justice to it, and I can only say that it should be read by anyone interested in science fiction at its most subtle, evocative and challenging. At the end of it all the reader is left to make up his own mind about its many mysteries, but this is by no means frustrating, so beautifully crafted and richly

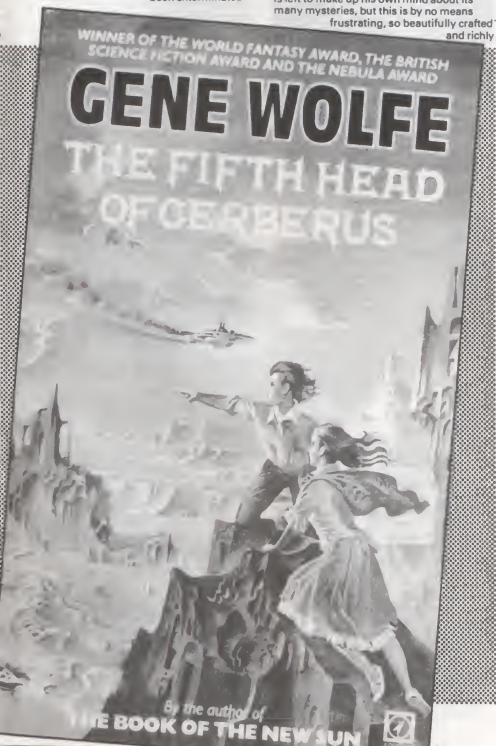
textured are the stories. *The Fifth Head of Cerberus* is, I believe, a genuine work of art, and if you only buy one sf book this month, make it this one.

The Fishers of Darksea by Roger Elridge (Gollancz, £7.95) is another well-crafted story about humans in a strange environment whose mysteries are fully revealed to the reader by the end. Along the way we learn of the culture of the inhabitants of Darksea, with their fear of water yet their dependence on it. The protagonist, No-Mirth, is made an outcast, but it is he who penetrates the mystery of the world in the time-honoured fashion of confronting the thing he fears most. This is traditional of sf which is more memorable than most by virtue of the care which has gone into the writing.

A more ambitious book is *RADIX* by A.A. Attanasio (Corgi, £2.95) which comes complete with a glossary, profiles of the main characters and a chronological table of events. "A mysterious fantasy," proclaims the blurb, "from the most talented new writer since Frank Herbert". A dubious accolade, in my view, though I can see the connection: both men have a tendency to overwrite. Attanasio is also hampered by his inability to write decent prose, which leads him to periphrase such phrases as "He felt her eyes grind into his", "Sumner's ears flared red" and "Sumner's stomach quivered as he remembered that day". My stomach quivered a lot, too, in trying to swallow this indeigestible prose, and I eventually gave up after 100 pages. *RADIX* is commendable in its ambitions but it's rife with solecisms and is an object example of how a writer's good intentions can be undermined by bad writing.

From King Penguin comes a second compilation of Stanislaw Lem titles at a hefty £4.95. The book comprises *Tales of Pirx the Pilot*, *Return from the Stars* and *The Invincible*. Lem is perhaps continental Europe's most eminent sf writer, and there's no doubting his intelligence and resourcefulness. But his brand of technological sf does seem a little old-fashioned to jaded Western eyes. The Pirx tales are scientific detective stories, and they appear especially dated. *Return to the Stars*, a novel about one man's response to a changed Earth, has its moments, but it's somewhat uneven. Only *The Invincible* is completely successful, perhaps because it's the most direct exploration of Lem's abiding preoccupation with the human race's attempts to understand and control the universe. A starship crew on another planet are threatened by a bizarre alien intelligence, and the result is a chilling portrait of an utterly non-human life-form.

Having exhausted sharks, crabs, bats, bees, rabid animals and other obvious nasties, we now have *Slugs* by Shaun Hutson (Star, £1.60), wherein the vicious creatures crawl into gardeners' gloves and proceed to chomp unsuspecting human hands to the bone in seconds. I never knew slugs had teeth. Some of them are up to eight inches long, though they don't appear to have developed super-speed, which means that the threat which they present to human civilization is less urgent than most of its kind. Nevertheless, several people meet grisly ends after the fashion of James Herbert before humanity is saved by pumping liberal doses of liquid arsenic down the sewers. There's obviously money in this sort of thing, so I'm now hard at work on *Tadpole Terror*, which will scare the tails off you.



This month as promised handy pocket guide to Rod Serling's *Night Gallery* and a word or two regarding *The Munsters*. The latter appears to be the most popular of the sixties comedy series on Channel 4. Before it actually started I hadn't placed the show at the top of the list of cherished memories. Instead I was eagerly awaiting *The Addams Family*, but having now witnessed each programme, for performance, script and ingenuity, *The Munsters* is undoubtedly the best and has stood the test of time extremely well. The American network NBC seem to be in agreement having commissioned a special about the weird inhabitants of Mockingbird Lane. Returning to their old roles are Fred Gwynne, Yvonne De Carlo and Al Lewis. Butch Patrick on the other hand who played the Munsters' son Eddie has now transformed into a fully grown werewolf, so the part fell to K.C. Martel. Jo McDonnell replaces Beverley Owen as the "ordinary" looking niece. Lets hope that ITV decide to screen this new version if only to prolong our visit to Grandpa's marvellous old laboratory.

Now for the *Night Gallery* episode guide. The series was produced by Jack Laird and was introduced by Rod Serling. A lot of people felt that it was a pale imitation of Serling's previous series *The Twilight Zone*. They're probably right, although it does contain some memorable moments. Like the TV movie that preceded it, each episode of *Night Gallery* contained three separate stories. As the series progressed however, the number of segment per week changed until (after 28 hour segments) it finally took on a half hour format. The list is not necessarily the order in which they were screened due to the ITV network shuffling the programme around the country and editing it to suit certain time slots, and for that very reason the number of stories does not dictate the number of episodes.

The Dead Man. Director Douglas Hayes. A doctor's terrifying experiment with hypnosis. *Room With A View*. Director Jerrold Freedman. Revenge of an unfaithful wife. *The Little Black Bag*. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A medical bag from the future. *The House*. Director John Astin. A girl dreams of a strange house. *The Housekeeper*. Director John M. Lucas. A man plans to change his nagging wife. *The Nature of the Enemy*. Director Allen Reisner. A trip to the moon. *The Academy*. Director Jeff Corey. A military school falls under suspicion. *The Late Mr. Peddington*. Director Jeff Corey. The late Mr. Peddington is still alive. *Lone Survivor*. Director Gene Levitt. A man cheats death on the Titanic. *Certain Shadows on the Wall*. Director Jeff Corey. A family is menaced by ghosts. *Make Me Laugh*. Director Steven Spielberg. A genie helps a depressed comedian. *Clean Kills and Other Tropies*. Director Walter Doniger. A boy is forced to kill. *The Funeral*. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A man returns to witness his own funeral. *Pamela's Voice*. Director Richard Benedict. A man kills his nagging wife. *The Doll*. Director Rudi Dorn. A sinister doll takes over a young girls soul. *The Last Laurel*. Director Daryl Duke. An unfaithful wife prompts a strange murder. *They're Tearing Down Rim Riley's Bar*. Director Don Taylor. The end of an era for a lonely man. *Miss Lovecraft Sent Me*. Director Gene Kearney. A vampire hires a babysitter.

The Hand of Bogus Weems. Director John M. Lucas. A revamped Hands of Orlac. *A Fear of Spiders*. Director John Astin. A woman seeks revenge on a man who rejected her.

Phantom of What Opera. Director Gene Kearney. A spoof of the classic tale with a twist.

The Boy Who Predicted Earthquakes. Director John M. Badham. An end of the world story. *Class of 99*. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A school classroom set in the future. *Satisfaction Guaranteed*. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A man selects girls for food.



Since Aunt Ada Came To Stay. Director William Hale. Aunt Ada turns out to be a witch.

Junior. Director Theodore Flicker. A short story about childminding at night.

A Death in the Family. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A wounded convict meets a strange man.

The Merciful. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A marriage becomes a nightmare.

The Diary. Director William Hale. A cruel columnist receives a diary from the grave. *A Midnight Visit To the Blood Bank*. Director William Hale. Another vampire story.

The Flip Side of Satan. Director Jerrold Freeman. A disc jockey encounters the occult. *Hell's Bells*. Director Theodore Flicker. A man finds his own private hell.

The Different Ones. Director John M. Lucas. A planet for misfits in the 1990s.

With Apologies to Mr Hyde. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A short story of Dr Jekyll.

Keep in Touch - We'll think of something. Director Gene Kearney. Dreams become reality.

Dr Stringfellow's Rejuvenator. Director Jerrold Freeman. A conman finds a cure. *Witches' Feast*. Director Jerrold Freeman. A man-tale of three old hags having lunch.

An Act of Chivalry. Director Jack Laird. A ghost finds himself trapped in a lift.

The Big Surprise. Director Jeannot Szwarc. Three boys dig a hole for a farmer.

Professor Peabody's Last Lecture. Director Jerrold Freeman. Evil spirits take revenge. *A matter of Semantics*. Director Jack Laird. A vampire checks out a local blood bank.

The Tune In Dan's Cafe. Director David Rayfael. A juke box plays the same record. *A Question of Fear*. Director Gene Kearney. A story of winter told by Orson Welles.

The Phantom Farmhouse. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A missing patient turns up murdered. *Marmalade Wine*. Director Jerrold Freeman. A young man is menaced by a surgeon.

A Feast of Blood. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A woman is given a mysterious gift.

The Devil Is Not Mocked ... Director Gene Kearney. Nazis are threatened by a vampire.

There Aren't Anymore MacBaines. Director John Newland. A demon from hell appears.

The Waiting Room. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A gunfighter encounters a strange town.

The Messiah of Mott Street. Director Don Taylor. A seventy year old man fights to live.

Quoth The Raven. Director Jeff Corey. A tribute to Edgar Allan Poe.

The Caterpillar. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A story to give you headaches.

The Painted Mirror. Director Gene Kearney. A strange mirror conjures up another time.

Legado's Heads. Director Robert Bloch. A voodoo curse climax's this short story.

Little Girl Lost. Director Timothy Gelfas. A scientist contacts his dead daughter.

Lindemann's Catch. Director Jeff Corey. A seaman captures a mermaid from the ocean.

Pickman's Model. Director Jack Laird. A terrifying tale of creatures in the sewers.

Room For One Less. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A short story concerning lifts.

Camera Obscura. Director John M. Badham. A camera controls time travel.

Cool Air. Director Jeannot Szwarc. An H.P. Lovecraft tale of suspended animation.

The Dear Departed. Director Jeff Corey. A spiritualist gets his just deserts.

Deliveries In The Rear. Director Jeff Corey. A tale of body stealing for surgery.

I'll never Leave You Ever. Director Daniel Haller. A woman visits an old witch.

House-With Ghost. Director Gene Kearney. A man tries to rid himself of his wife.

How To Cure The Common Vampire. Director Jack Laird. A tale with a great deal at stake.

The Return of The Sorcerer. Director Jeannot Szwarc. An Arabic curse is translated.

Flight Night. Director Jeff Corey. A couple find an ancient trunk in the attic.

The Dark Boy. Director John Astin. A teacher is haunted by a little boy.

Green Fingers. Director John M. Badham. A garden comes to life and seeks revenge.

The Sins of the Fathers. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A tale of sin-eating in Wales.

You Can't Help Like That Anymore. Director Jeff Corey. Robots are abused.

Brenda. Director Allen Reisner. A young girl meets a weird-looking monster.

The Ghost of Sorworth Place. Director Ralph Senensky. A ghostly Scottish tale.

Tell David. Director Jeff Corey. A girl lost in her car glimpses the future.

Midnight Never Ends. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A couple become trapped in a timewarp.

The Doll of Death. Director John Badham. voodoo features prominently in the story.

Death On A Barge. Director Leonard Nimoy. Another tale of vampire.

She'll Be Company For You. Director Gerald Perry Finneman. A cat becomes a menace.

Something In The Woodwork. Director Edmunds M. Abrams. A ghost in the attic?

Finnegan's Flight. Director Gene Kearney. A convict tries to escape life imprisonment.

Hatred Unto Death. Director Gerald Perry Finneman. A strange gorilla poses trouble.

Rare Objects. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A gangster seeks help from his girlfriend.

You Can Come Up Now, Mrs Millikan. Director John Badham. An inventor endangers life.

Whisper. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A young girl keeps hearing noises in an old house.

The Ring With The Velvet Ropes. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A very unsporting tale.

The Girl With The Hungry Eyes. Director John Badham. A photographer faces death.

Spectre in Tap Shoes. Director Jeannot Szwarc. A girl is threatened by her dead sister.

The Other Way Out. Director Gene Kearney. A man becomes involved in murder.

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THE MAN WITH 9 HEADS

For many years, to most fans of the *fantastique*, the star-studded *The Man With 9 Heads* was nothing more than a few stills in old horror movie magazines. One of the prime reasons for this undeserved obscurity was the fact that the film has never been shown since its original release in October, 1937, either theatrically or on tv. Tied up in a tangle of lawyers' red tape and copyright litigation, the ownership of *The Man With 9 Heads* is in some dispute. No prints are known to have survived in this country or in America. Whenever some film society or other would pop up and claim to have discovered a print of the picture it would invariably turn out to be the far more routine Karloff vehicle, *The Man With Nine Lives*. That there were three false alarms in 1979 alone was the source of no little anxiety for most film historians.

Since its disappearance, the film has remained something of a mystery to most film fans. Little was written about the movie around the time of its release. The contemporary critics looked upon the film in much the same way that today's national critics see the stalk-and-slash cycle. Even Boris Karloff, the movie's principle player, tended to be dismissive when questioned on the subject. In one interview he even went so far as to say, "I made so many pictures like that one that now they all merge into one. Leave it be. My surviving films couldn't stand the competition." To an actor of Karloff's stature, his role as the initially kindly Dr Goldberg must have seemed to similar to the roles he played before and after.

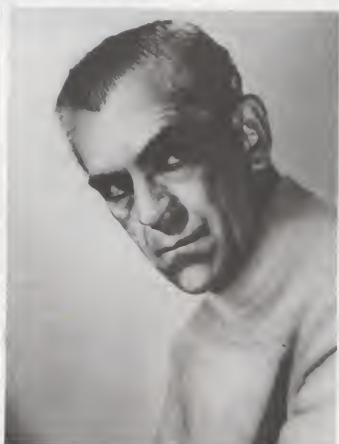
However, in early 1981, a group of workmen were clearing out an old movie theatre in Liverpool when they found a cupboard full of

original prints of late thirties and forties films. Among the find were such commonplace items as *The Bride of Frankenstein* and Douglas Sirk's *Hitler's Madman* (1944). But far more important were three reels of John Ford's *Judge Priest* (1934), a complete copy of Bette Davis' *Housewife* (1934) and all eight reels of *The Man With 9 Heads* (1937). At first excitement was rife among the various film bodies in Britain. Each wanted the kudos of having restored and copied the only "lost" Karloff film. But when the original print was screened for the benefit of the would-be "saviours" each made his apologies and backed out. Leaving only **Starburst** to step in and put up the money.

Why should respectable film bodies be unenthusiastic to preserve such a lost classic? Perhaps because it is uncharacteristic of its time. Most of the horror films of the thirties tended to leave blood in the shadows or at least out of view of the camera. But director Edgar Ulmer, who directed the earlier Karloff/Lugosi co-starrer *The Black Cat* (1934), felt that the sight of blood had been kept from the cinema-going public long enough. Unfortunately, the Hays Office and the film's distributors did not agree. They attempted to remove all sight of blood from the finished cut of the film. But Ulmer had shot his story in such a way that this was impossible. The picture's backers reluctantly gave up the struggle and shelved the movie.

But none of this is to suggest that *The Man With 9 Heads* is a kind of *Friday the 13th Part 0*. Ulmer was too much of an artist to clutter up his screen with welters of blood. What there remains discreet throughout.

The story concerns the work of Dr Solomon Goldberg (Boris



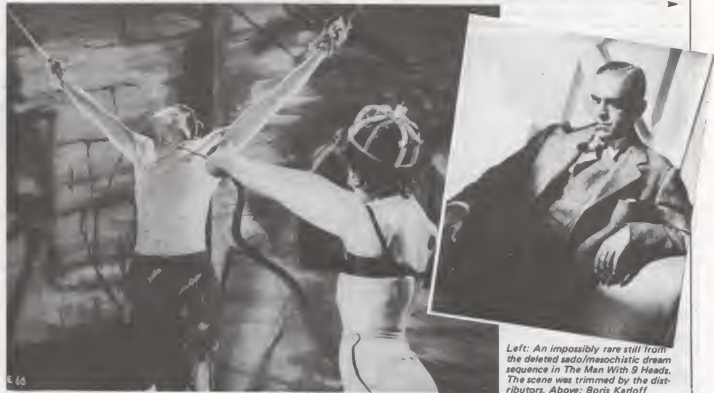


Karloff) in surgical research. Goldberg is firm in his belief that a human head transplant is a possibility. He has already performed the operation on all manner of laboratory animals and now feels he is ready to risk the operation on a human subject. The board of directors (eight of them, played by Basil Rathbone, Cedric Hardwick, Peter Lorre, Lon Chaney Jr, Bela Lugosi, Ernest Thesiger, Vincent Price and John Carradine) are appalled at the suggestion and forbid Goldberg to make any such attempt. Goldberg is crushed. His appetite goes, he becomes depressed and his work suffers. Then, one night, Goldberg's daughter Rachel is out driving with her fiancé, Dave Morton (played by a young Vincent Price). There is an accident. Morton's car spins out of control and collides with a tree. Morton is only dazed but Rachel's body is mutilated beyond repair. As she arrives at the hospital, Goldberg realises that the only thing that can save his daughter is

the head transplant operation. Goldberg knows that there is a suitable body donor in the morgue. He can succeed. But first he needs the permission of the Hospital Board. In a protracted scene Goldberg desperately tries to get in touch with one of the directors to ask permission. He is refused. Pleadingly he turns to Morton. He is on the Board. Surely he will act to see the woman he loves live? Morton is repelled by the thought of Rachel's head on another woman's body and pushes Goldberg to the ground and rushes off into the night. A few hours later, Goldberg has decided to press on with the operation regardless of permission. He works feverishly through the night, aided only by his deformed assistant, Thor (Rondo Hatton), and succeeds in restoring life to his daughter's mind if not her body. During the crucial final moments of the operation, the Board breaks into the operating theatre and pulls the plug on the life support systems, causing Rachel's barely living form to die once and for all. Karloff gives one of his most stunning performances as a man whose world has disintegrated around him. Locked up in prison like a common criminal, he has lost his daughter, his job, his dreams. And underneath the calm facade, Dr Goldberg is going quite insane. He plots to avenge the death of the only person in the world he loved. Released after a few days by the police, when they discover that he hasn't broken any laws, Goldberg goes into hiding in his own laboratory. He formulates a plan to punish the Hospital Board. A far more subtle torture than killing them. But he will need a body. A big body. If he were to use the body of his imbecile assistant, he could go about transplanting the heads of the members of the Hospital Board onto one torso. They'd have to stay together for the rest of their lives. No court in the country would allow an attempt to separate them. Only he could do that.

With this twisted plan, Goldberg sets out to collect the heads of his enemies. After eight delightfully creative beheadings, Goldberg is ready to operate. But the police are already on his trail. Arriving at the laboratory just a moment too late, they witness the hideous monstrosity break free and disappear into the darkness. The hunt is on. A squad of detectives lead by Lt Kowolsky (Dick Dennet) try to track the monster down, a feat made more difficult as the creature's controlling head, the original, has been driven crazy by the experience. Time and again Goldberg is questioned on where Thor might go when distressed. Goldberg has no idea. But Kowolsky gets one of those brainwaves common in last reels of low budget horror films and checks Goldberg's story one last time. He stops him at the account of Rachel's death on the operating table. There was the answer. Kowolsky and Goldberg rush to the cemetery where Rachel is buried. Across the grave is slumped the body of the creature. Only the Vincent Price head is left alive. In a big tear-jerking finale, Price reveals that it was he who made the creature come here, and expires. Kowolsky makes a speech about guilt and the end credits roll.

In the film's original promotional art, it was suggested by the posters that Karloff played the title role. This made good sense to



Left: An impossibly rare still from the deleted sadomasochistic dream sequence in *The Man With 9 Heads*. The scene was trimmed by the distributors. Above: Boris Karloff.

the publicity folk in the front office of Monogram Pictures. It was only two years earlier that Karloff had broken box-office records as another more famous monster in *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935). A double error, Karloff had not played the title role in that film either. Nevertheless, it made for good showmanship and in later years even such illustrious publications as *Famous Monsters* have compounded the error by mentioning "Karloff as The Man With Nine Heads".

In the plot and script department, the film is dangerously close to a parody of such films as Columbia's *The Man They Could Not Hang*, which also starred Karloff as in initially kindly Doctor. But Ulmer's atmospheric direction and Karloff's superb performance more than compensate for this pitfall. The movie was successful in the few weeks that it remained running in 1937. In fact, it was so successful that a group of British comedians, lead by a young Peter Sellers, remade the story in 1961 under the title of *Heading On*. The film was a box office failure.

The Man With 9 Heads was not without its production difficulties. Originally, the budget was set for an unprecedented \$500,000. A huge budget for pre-war Hollywood. Michael Curtiz was set to direct but at the last minute, the loaning studio, Warner Brothers, changed their minds and put him to work on *Captain Blood* (1935) instead. There was a desperate search for a director. Names like Karl Freund and James Whale were considered, but each was too busy on his own project. Time was running out. Monogram had become nervous and slashed the budget by half. If the producers were to keep their stars they had to start filming. They settled on German immigrant director Edgar Ulmer and shooting began in the Spring of 1936. All went according to plan until the film ran over schedule due to special effects difficulties. Ulmer was denied the time he needed to perfect the sequences involving the creature. Making a nine-headed man convincing on film was no mean task. That it was accomplished as well as it speaks volumes of Ulmer's skill. No special effects man was credited. But the trouble didn't end there. When Ulmer's cut of the film was screened for Monogram executives, they were appalled at what they saw. They were not prepared for what was then an unprecedented realism as far as blood went. Also the scenes involving the beheadings were milked for every ounce of tension, giving the film something of a roller-coaster effect which left the audience emotionally drained at the end of 85 minutes. The studio ordered the film to be re-cut. It was Ulmer's turn to be horrified. The proposed cuts made nonsense of the story. The first to go was to be the operating room scene with Rachel. This cut effectively turned the Goldberg character into a common or garden homicidal maniac. Luckily Monogram saw the wisdom of Ulmer's advice and reinstated the scene. However, they were insistent that the gore in the beheading scenes was reduced. Ulmer reluctantly obeyed and trimmed ten seconds out of his film. The accountants seemed pleased in having won the war and released the picture. For three weeks, audiences flocked to see the film. But in a short time, a local Los Angeles pressure group was drowning the Hays Office in complaints, seeing such unsavoury concepts as incest and sado masochism where none existed. Principly, they objected to a dream sequence



which occurs while the Goldberg character is in jail. The dream includes a vision of Goldberg being whipped by Rachel in a dungeon. The Hays Office agreed and ordered the sequence removed. Monogram complied and put the film out a second time. It was too late. The bad publicity the incident had raised had doomed the movie's chances at the box-office. Monogram tried to explain that the dream was a manifestation of Goldberg's guilt that he had not saved his daughter, but the public had lost interest and the film was lost to several generations of film fans.

Happily, the film is one of the more entertaining discoveries of recent years and already there are rumours of a television sale, probably to Channel 4. Try to see it if only for Lon Chaney Jr's spirited performance as a gynaecologist and Vincent Price's slimy Dave Morton character. This and the undeniable attraction of seeing Lugosi and Karloff act together once more puts *The Man With 9 Heads* firmly into the bracket of horror classics ●



Left: Lt Kowolsky (Dick Dennis) questions the caretaker of a graveyard about *The Man With 9 Heads*. His black assistant and a bearded Bela Lugosi look on.

Seeing is Believing!
The Horror that walks

THE MAN WITH 9 HEADS

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LUGOSI

LIONEL

BASIL

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ATWILL

RATHBONE

HARDWICKE

CARRADINE

and Rondo HATTON

Lon CHANEY Jr

Peter LORRE

Screenplay by Garret Ford, from a story by William Sloan

Directed by Edgar Ulmer Produced by Jim Burrell

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We talk to Richard Marquand, director
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exclusive interview. Marquand speaks
candidly about the making of the movie,
the change in title and the fate of the
principle characters... be here!

